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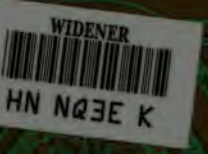

THE WHISPERER

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THE WHISPERER.

BY

MRS S. C. HALL,

AUTHOR OF STORIES OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY, &c.

EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.
1850.

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THE WHISPERER.

"I HAVE told you twenty times, Isabella, of that ugly habit of yours," said Aunt Tart to her niece. "Why do you not speak out? What can you possibly have to say to Clementine that all the world may not hear? And even if you had that great ambition of all young ladies to disclose—a 'real secret'—it is not polite to *whisper in company.*"

Isabella and Clementine looked what their brother called "goosish," and made no answer. Their brother—a large, awkward boy—who, with both his elbows on the table, and his red fingers wandering over his forehead, pretended, or, as children call it, "made believe," to look at a map, withdrew his hands, and after giving two or three preliminary kicks to the chair on

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which he was seated, said, "Girls have always secrets about nothing, Aunt Tart; they *aint* like boys."

"I wish, Edward, you would not use those vulgar abbreviations," said Aunt Tart. "I assure you these 'aints,' and 'don'ts,' and 'wonts,' sound very underbred; and, what is of even more consequence, they are bad English."

"Lah, Aunt, you are such a one! The honourable Dick Dovecot, and Jack Lawless, and the very best *fellows* on our form, are *up to that sort of thing*. They aint—— But indeed I do beg your pardon, aunt. I don't—— There, I'm at it again, and I did *not* intend it! Dear aunt, I have made you look as if you were drinking vinegar!"

"Oh, Edward, for shame!" said Isabella.

"But aunt says I must always speak the truth," said Edward; "and she did look"——

"Hush!" whispered Clementine.

"Speak on, and speak out," observed their aunt, who, though she did often look much annoyed at what people, more accustomed to be troubled by children than she was, would certainly call "little things," was one of the kindest-hearted women in the world. "Speak

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on, and speak out, Edward; your doing so troubles me less than your sisters' whisperings."

Edward cast a triumphant glance towards his sisters. "Well, then, aunt, you aint—— I mean you have—not—been—used—to—boys"——

"Nor to girls either," murmured Clementine.

"And so I think," continued Edward, "I must be a greater trouble to you, dear aunt, than I should be to any other body—I mean lady—who had run *neck-and-neck* with boys—I mean who had been used to be tormented by us all her life-long."

"Very likely," was his aunt's quiet reply.

"And indeed, aunt, I am sorry for it; everybody knows that, thanks to you, I have *more tin to sport*—I beg your pardon, aunt, I mean more money to spend—than any of the other lads; and I am sure I thrashed Joe Finch, though he is so much bigger and stronger than I am, because he said you were an old maid."

"That was only the truth, Edward, and no wrong to say it," said Aunt Tart; "and I am sorry you 'thrashed,' as you call it."

"Why, I *did* thrash him, and *no mistake*," repeated the incorrigible Edward—who certainly

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was more extensively read in slang than in Homer. "And as to being sorry about whopping a fellow—I mean a schoolfellow, aunt—why, I should be set down as a *muff* if I didn't, that's all."

"Is there no language you can speak as correctly as fluently?" inquired Miss Tart.

"*I'm booked* if I know, aunt!" replied the youth, really distressed at the annoyance he gave his aunt, and yet hardly knowing how to give his thoughts utterance in pure gentlemanly English. "I have worked at the languages; but they *floor me* so! There, aunt, the girls are whispering again!" he added, not sorry to direct into a new channel the displeasure that was gathering against him.

"Indeed, aunty," whined Isabel, "we were talking no harm: it was nothing—only about *snipping* the ribbon you know, instead of its being drawn into rosettes—nothing else indeed, dear aunt; and Clem. said she liked it snipped best."

"Your sister's name is Clementine, my dear; and certainly Isabella and Clementine are more lady-like names than 'Clem.' and 'Bell.'"

Miss Tart's spirits were worn out; she dearly

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loved her sister's three orphan children—the children of her sister Mrs Villiers: she was tremblingly alive to their defects, which, though really disagreeable, her affection magnified; and she deeply felt the responsibility of her situation as the guardian of those children. She was a lady of the "old school," which, however clever, and brilliant, and "off-hand" the new may be, had certainly the advantage of better manners, better English, and more graceful deportment. She had in her youth mingled with the highest and purest society: she was refined without the affectation of refinement; but she had lived thirty years in retirement, and heard only of the revolutions of empires beside the banks of the beautiful river which meandered round her cottage in North Wales, and never thought they could affect the manners of society. Circumstances which have nothing to do with this particular portion of her life had estranged her sister from her, though she was never estranged from her sister, so that she had had no opportunity of raising her voice against the "*no system*" of the children's education. Mrs Villiers, after her husband's death, had been so long an invalid, that the children had been left to the management

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of their maids, and the society of their maids' friends, and thus acquired habits and manners which could not fail to be painful not only to a person of Miss Tart's high breeding and refined taste, but to any one accustomed to the good society of the present time. During the last two years of his mother's life, Edward had spent his holidays chiefly with his mother's coachman —an honest servant, and deserving respect in his position, but not the companion his aunt would have chosen for her nephew. After Mrs Villier's death, Miss Tart left her retirement to reside with her nieces near London, that she might be able to procure the best instruction for them, and make, as she hoped to do, a pleasant home for her nephew during his vacations. She saw, with real thankfulness to the Giver of all good gifts, despite his awkwardness and want of manners, the noble disposition and generous nature of Edward Villiers, while she deplored most bitterly his acquaintance with *slang* and his ungentlemanly bearing.

The young ladies were shy and awkward—very much afraid of their aunt, and consequently appearing to greater disadvantage before her than before any one else. Of all their *gauche*

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habits, the one which gave Miss Tart the greatest annoyance was their habit of whispering.

Clementine was prone, whenever she spoke, to twist her fingers together, and push her right shoulder above the confines of its shoulder-strap, until the frock sat quite crooked: Isabella kept up a perpetual drumming with her left foot; and there was no end to the twitchings and twirlings, the contortions and grimaces, of Edward. No sooner had Clementine's shoulder been returned to its legitimate position beneath its strap, than Isabella began drumming; and she had no sooner finished that exercise, than Edward commenced drawing his mouth on one side, or elevating one eyebrow while he depressed the other; or sometimes they would keep up a trio of strange movements, so that poor Miss Tart did not know who to reprove first. It was really extraordinary how three young people, who had not a single vice to contend against, simply by their bad habits and manners, rendered themselves so thoroughly disagreeable not only to Miss Tart—though she certainly was the greatest sufferer—but to all their best and kindest friends; so that no one desired to receive or be with them.

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Edward had taken his slang phrases to school; and because some few lads there vulgarised the English language, and laughed when he did it, he thought it amusing and manly to talk like a coachman and whistle like a gamekeeper—neglecting the advantages of position and education, and adopting the very faults of his inferiors, as if they had been perfections.

Poor Miss Tart, while she loved her tormentors, was ashamed of them. She had as thorough a dislike to girls' schools as I have: at best, she thought them necessary evils; and yet sometimes she wished she had placed her nieces at school, instead of devoting herself to their service. "They would perhaps pay more attention to strangers than they do to me," she said to herself, while going through the weary task of regulating Clementine's wardrobe, or smoothing with careful finger the lop-ears out of Isabel's music, or gazing with feelings akin to despair at Edward's "boxes."

"I am ashamed that even my own maid should see *the state* in which these things are," she thought again. "And as to poor Edward, I am so glad Cousin Jacob is coming. If any one can set these young people to rights, and

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teach me how to manage them, it is Jacob. I hope, however, he will not be too severe. I remember, when I was a girl"——

Now, just at the moment—at the very instant when this thought occurred to Miss Tart—her eyes met her own reflection in the looking-glass opposite the table at which she stood; and while her memory recalled what she had been "when a girl," she remained looking fixedly at the faithful portrait of the present. Hers was a thoughtful rather than an intellectual brow, shaded by abundant folds of very gray hair, which rendered the darkness of her large brown eyes, and their long lashes, more striking than they would otherwise have been: the face was round rather than oval, but strongly marked by time, who seemed at war with the bland smile which had turned dimples into wrinkles all around her mouth: her figure was erect, and still well-proportioned; but there was an air of shyness and timidity in her manner and movements very remarkable at her age; and certainly Edward was not in error when he said "that Aunt Tart looked very handsome when she blushed."

"When I was a girl," repeated the lady, whom

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it seemed hardly discourteous to call "old"—"when I was a girl, and considered a beauty, and set a value upon it—absolutely set a high value upon what had not the value of a common rose, for the spring renews *its* youth—youth which we know but once! And yet," she added, "how foolish and ungrateful are my thoughts! When the things of the more earthy world, after the passing away of a few springs, return to and *remain* in the mouldering clay, I hope to renew *my* youth in another world where nothing decays. I have heard it said also that every age has its beauty. I am sure I hope so; but"—and she shook her head at the mirror—"I am sure I see none there! It must be a very awful thing for a woman to grow old without having her heart kept open by an interest in the young. I am sure mine is open enough, or I should not fret as I do about those tormenting, dear children. I fancied the girls would have been such neat, orderly, affectionate, elegant little creatures by this time—quite companions! Instead of *that*, whatever they have to say to each other when I am present, they *whisper*. I always did expect the boy to be a torment: I never did hear of a boy who was a comfort in a

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house, except one, and, poor child, he had lost the use of his limbs—so was very quiet! And yet I really think, if it were not for the slang, and the fidgets, and grimaces, and those awful kicks he gives the poor chairs—if it were not for these matters, Edward would be a much greater comfort to me than his sisters. Were there ever such lop-ears in books before! Well, when Cousin Jacob comes, I think matters must mend. The certainty that all this worry will send me to my grave very soon would be a relief, but for the fear of what those poor children would go through if they had not some tender relative to see to their comforts."

Aunt Tart had contracted a habit of talking to herself. She would con over her thoughts, repeating and arranging them; and sometimes Edward, who was so truly honourable as never to wish to hear what people did not like to tell him, would exclaim, when some half-muttered thought or intention escaped his aunt's lips—"Well, dear aunt, you did not intend to say that," and he would repeat what she had fancied was only a thought; or, fixing his great eyes on her, would say—"Now, aunty, you are going to say what is passing in your mind. I see it gathering on

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your brows, and trembling on your lips." And Aunt Tart was pleased at the admonition—it was so honourable.

"My dear boy is high-minded," she said, "and that is a comfort. I daresay it will be all right when Cousin Jacob comes. There is nothing mean about the boy: he does not want to pry into my thoughts. No: he is above that."

"Aunt," inquired Edward one day, immediately after she had reproved him for walking, or rather *kicking*, through the dust which a sharp wind had drifted into a hollow path by the roadside—they walked out together in the hope of seeing even the approach of the carriage which was to bring Cousin Jacob to Wayville—"aunt, is Cousin Jacob like you?"

"Oh no, dear: he is short, and round, and fat, and rosy—quite a fat boy!"

"Boy, aunt! Why, you told me yesterday he was an *older fellow*—— I beg pardon, dear aunty; I meant to say that I understood he was older than you?"

"I meant he *was* a fat boy when I saw him last; but, to be sure, that must be—for—well—a great number of years ago."

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"Before Clem—— I mean Clementine—was born?"

"Yes; long, long before."

"Perhaps you would not know him if you saw him, aunt?"

"Oh yes, dear, I should. Do, dear Edward, throw that stick away, or avoid knocking the head off every flower you meet. What good does it do you to destroy those lovely flowers?"

"Oh, aunt, I *dun-know*."

"It is as easy to say I do not know as 'I *dun-know*,' Edward. Dear me, Clementine, you have pushed Isabel's bonnet quite on one side: what can you have to whisper about here?"

"Ah, ah!" exclaimed a very active little man, while flinging himself over a stile which terminated a pathway leading across some fields to the London road; "I wish young ladies whispered less to each other, and attended to the WHISPERER more."

The speaker stood in the midst of the path, and extended both hands towards Miss Tart, who drew back, murmuring, "I do not know you."

"Not know me! Well, I know you. These two young ladies—vibrating between hoydenism

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and babyhood, disdaining dolls, avoiding books, aping 'big girls,' and disliked by little ones—are Clementine and Isabella Villiers: that great, awkward boy, feeling the knives, and pegtops, and money, and marbles, and whistles, and wax, and string, and sticky 'sweets,' and nuts, and crackers he has in his trousers pocket with one hand, and half-inclined to suck the thumb of the other, from the *calfish* propensity he has in common with his kind to put everything into his mouth—that boy is Edward Villiers: and you, with the snows of winter on your brow, and the blushes of spring on your cheek, are my Cousin Emmeline, whom I never could think of as 'Little *Tart!*'"

"Short, and stout, and fat, and rosy!" exclaimed Aunt Tart, involuntarily repeating her description.

"Ah, that was what I was some few—a great number of years ago. I have since then lived in many lands, educated many children, and buried two wives. But time deals gently with you, Emmeline," continued the little, old, shrivelled-up gentleman, in a small, tight, half-military coat buttoned up to his chin—"time deals very gently with you, my cousin! The whiteness of

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the snow has displaced the wing of the raven; but there are the gentle eyes, the bright blush, and the tender smile. These young folk worry you: nay, never deny it; maiden aunts only get used to children they have dandled in long clothes: of course they worry you. Nothing will keep them in order but the Whisperer: we must turn them over to him at once—that is the veritable Wizard of the North, the real bottle conjurer, the actual necromancer!"

"And are you really Cousin Jacob?" inquired Aunt Tart; "really my little playfellow? But how did you come? Where is your carriage? Where is your valet?"

"I brought no carriage, cousin—and I hate railways, and travelled post: postchaise broke down—and so I came a short cut to Wayville."

"Your servant?"

"My dear Emmeline," interrupted the little man, "for some years I lived in bondage to the cares and caprices of a favourite valet: he pretended to wait upon me, but in reality I had to wait upon him. I am now emancipated: I have absolutely got rid of him: I pensioned him off, and since then, have felt a free man. No, no," he repeated, "my carpet-bag and valise will find

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their way to Wayville, for I have not yet paid the postboys; and here I am, and here I shall stay until I get these young folk into proper training—a work which, with the aid of the Whisperer, I mean very shortly to accomplish."

Edward, brave and free as he was, shrunk behind his cousin. He had pictured to himself what he irreverently called a "jolly old gent.;" but here was a keen-sighted, quick-witted, sharp, commanding sort of "I-will-be-obeyed-and-at-once" person, having, by their father's will, much control over them: a man evidently well versed in all things connected with young people—whose keen, rapid, determined eye glanced from one to the other, and all the young people saw instantly that "Cousin Jacob" was not to be "managed." Their aunt looked back for a moment: Edward was twisting his face into various, and certainly not *pleasing*, expressions, and kicking the stones off the raised pathway into the grass; while Clementine's bonnet was thrust against Isabella's ear. Aunt Tart was seized with one of her nervous fits, and could not help exclaiming, "What in the world, young ladies, can you have to *whisper* about now?"

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"Come, my dear," said Cousin Jacob, turning rapidly round—so rapidly, that they started—"Come, my dear, what were you saying? Come, quick: no one keeps Cousin Jacob waiting!"

"Please, sir," replied the young lady, "I was only saying I wondered would your Whisperer be a resident or a daily governess?"

"Governess," he muttered; "that's good;" adding aloud, "resident—resident! And *you* were thinking on the subject, I am sure?" said the old gentleman, addressing himself to Edward.

"Please, sir, I was. The only Whisperer I ever heard of was one Tom Oakes told me about, who used to take an obstinate horse by the ear, and if he was a regular Turk (the horse, I mean), after a few sentences just breathed into his ear, he became so obedient, that at the word of command he would roll in the hay like a young kitten: Tom often told me of him—did you know him, sir? Tom told a story in prime style. I beg your pardon, dear aunt; I mean that Tom told a story well."

"Whom did you mean to inquire if I knew?" questioned Cousin Jacob—"Tom or the Whisperer? I had not the advantage of Tom's acquaintance. Pray who was Tom?"

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"Our helper, sir — that is, the groom's helper."

"Oh, I see; a stable-friend of yours. I am sorry, young gentleman, you know no one in your own rank of life whose information you could quote; but I have seen the Whisperer myself; and I assure you I have *known* a Whisperer do more extraordinary things than change a wild steed into a tame horse."

"How capital it is that *you* knew the real living Whisperer your own self, sir: that *is* capital. I never expected to have seen any one who knew him. It is famous!" exclaimed Edward with enthusiasm. "I always thought he must be a wonderful man. Great men have not disdained to manage horses—have they, sir?"

"No, my boy, they have not. Alexander (I suppose you know who Alexander the Great was?—well, I see you do)—he managed Bucephalus; and *there* the horse and man were well met; but it pains me to see such a noble animal as the horse left to the society of coarse stable-boys, illiterate grooms, and vulgar gentlemen! Think of the pain it must give a high-bred horse to hear nothing but slang, and to have his

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wide and beautiful nostrils, which seems framed to scent health and fragrance on the breeze, insulted by the fumes of tobacco, or the perpetual smell of table-beer and porter! I really wonder how the animals endure it." Cousin Jacob spoke very seriously, and Edward felt uncomfortable; but the old gentleman changed the subject quickly, for he had the happy art of amusing and interesting, even while he reproved."

During that evening Cousin Jacob's presence was hardly felt to be a restraint, he was so pleasant and so cheerful—so full of anecdote, without, however, saying more than a word or two: he had a manner of fixing—or, as Clementine inelegantly though expressively called it, "*screwing*"—his eyes upon them, that, if they were indulging any of their awkward tricks, compelled them to desist. Once when Isabella "lugged" her sister's head towards her to whisper some nothing into her ear, Cousin Jacob seized Aunt Tart's cap, and drew her towards him in the same ungainly and ungraceful manner. Isabella and Clementine saw at once the effect of the movement, and *felt themselves to be ridiculous!* "I beg your pardon, Cousin Emmeline,"

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said the old gentleman; "but I wanted to show the young ladies how they looked."

"I do not much like your method of reproving these children, Cousin Jacob," said Aunt Tart to him after they were gone to bed. "I do not, my good friend, doubt but you may show them the absurdity of their conduct, but you hurt their feelings. They do not like to be laughed at. I would rather reason with them."

"Reason away, my dear Emmeline—reason on, reason ever, if it amuses or interests you. You have your way, I have mine. I am sure yours is the most legitimate mode of proceeding; but I must take my own course. With some of my children I succeeded admirably; others their mothers managed better; others not so well. These young things, even to-night, were talking of—and Miss Isabella (the merry blue-eyed one)"——

"No, that is Clementine."

"Well, she was mimicking and ridiculing some one in the village"——

"I know—I know!" exclaimed poor Miss Tart. "I have lectured her for it often."

"And she does it still? Turn the tables on her, and see how she will like it."

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"I do not think it is right to do what is wrong, even to cure a fault," replied Miss Tart gravely.

"You are right, my cousin; but Old Jacob must have his own way. Put the poisoned chalice to her own lips. See how she will like the bitter draught she is so ready to give to others. Do not spare, but fall in with me. I must get them to listen to the Whisperer. And now, good-night; you must not wonder if I jest a little at the *maiden lady's* practical education. Good-night, sweet Lady-cousin Emmeline."

At breakfast the next morning Edward came in late, and looked heated and distressed. He limped, too, a little; and once or twice the loving eyes of his affectionate aunt perceived that he put his hand to his side. She immediately began a series of inquiries. "Was he heated?"

Cousin Jacob laughed at what he called unnecessary questions. "Any one could see he was *hot:* why did she inquire?"

"What was the matter then?"

"What does *it* matter, dear coz, when my coffee is cooling?"

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"I tell you, cousin, the boy is not well."

"Two tablespoonfuls of castor"——

"Indeed, Jacob"—— interrupted the kind aunt, "a black and bitter mixture will do as well."

"Well, I can tell as well as he: he has been to the stable."

"I have no stable—keep no horses," said Aunt Tart; "so you are wrong."

"I did not say *your* stable, Emmeline—I said stable: he has been to a stable."

Edward coloured and looked awkward, as indeed he always did.

"He has been to a stable, for he smells of a stable; and there are two very decided stable straws sticking to his left heel."

Isabella and Clementine laughed, and were going to whisper, when a glance from Cousin Jacob changed their intent, and one murmured rather than spoke—there was not much either to whisper or murmur, for all the young lady said, or intended to say, was "Oh dear!"

"He went to a stable," continued Cousin Jacob, "and he mounted a horse."

"Oh, Edward!" said his aunt.

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"And the horse threw him, and laughed a neighing laugh at him afterwards."

Edward became very red indeed, and his dear kind aunt inquired most lovingly how it was, and where it was, and was he hurt, and should she send for a doctor?

"I am sure I don't know how our cousin knew anything about it," said the boy, "for I gave Rory a shilling not to tell. I see how cousin laughs at us, and I did not want him to know. The next time I trust Rory with a secret, *he'll keep it!*"

"Oh, will he?" inquired Cousin Jacob, while chipping his egg.

"The blab!"

"But are you much hurt, Edward?" said Miss Tart.

"No, dear aunt, thank you."

"Only imperfectly brushed," observed the old gentleman. "You should have taken care to be well brushed. Your jacket has a bruised, ungentlemanly appearance."

"But how did you know that the horse, as you call it, sir, laughed at me?"

"Because a horse always knows who he may laugh at, and who deserves to be laughed at."

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Edward looked sadly mortified. "I thought," said the boy, "one Whisperer was as good as another, and so I blew into his ears, and talked into his ears, and threatened to flog him if he showed any tempers, and mounted him because the groom at Malcolm's said I dared not; and then he flung me into a heap of sand, and then, as my cousin, who seems to know everything, knows, he stooped to look at me, and laughed, after his fashion — the vicious brute!"

"The foolish boy!" exclaimed Cousin Jacob.

Aunt Tart dreaded being laughed at by Cousin Jacob, or she would have proposed a hot bath and bleeding after the accident.

"So you wanted to play the Whisperer, did you, my boy? But believe me it is not to be played at: on the contrary, the Whisperer will have his own way; you cannot silence him; he is an obstinate fellow—a most determined preacher."

"I thought he was a horse-dealer, or doctor, or something of that kind, cousin."

"Ah! you are thinking of a Whisperer of one kind—of the *Man Whisperer;* and I am thinking of another," said Cousin Jacob; "but

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the mystery—the power of the Man Whisperer —was never explained."

"I should really (if Edward is not the worse for his tumble; and I must say I wish both boys and men would avoid horses)," said Aunt Tart, who was very timid, and could hardly be prevailed upon to let her nieces mount a donkey. "If Edward is not the worse (and his appetite is pretty good), I should like you, Cousin Jacob, some day soon, to tell us the real story of the Whisperer, who tamed horses without treating them cruelly."

"I did not say *that*, cousin," said the old gentleman. "I did not say that the horses were not treated cruelly; but if they were, there was no evidence of it. I will tell you all I know with pleasure; and when Edward hears that no one, since the Old Whisperer's death, has done such things with horses, I think he will not be so foolish as to attempt to practise what he does not understand. I said," continued the old gentleman, and he smiled, "no one had practised the art on *horses* since; but Whisperers are very busy sometimes with asses, though they do not make much of them."

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"Certainly," thought Aunt Tart, "Cousin Jacob at times has a very disagreeable smile."

"Certainly," thought the young sisters, who had not attempted to whisper to each other all that morning, "our old cousin has a very strange twist about his mouth at times, as if he was laughing *at*, not *with* us."

"Certainly," thought Edward, "Cousin Jacob *fixes* one with his way: such an odd way it is of turning his mouth at the corners. I am sure I have thought more about myself—I mean more of what I have done, and am going to do—since he came, just from the odd way he puts things, than I did for a long time before. Yes, certainly he makes me think."

"Well, my dears," commenced the old gentleman again, "you are not going, I hope, to leave all this room at sixes and sevens. There are a hundred little matters to settle and arrange in a breakfast-room after the servants have taken away the breakfast-things, and made all 'straight,' as *they* call it. Now, Miss Isabella, if, instead of straining your long neck towards me, just as a heron does at a fish below the surface of the water, you were to arrange those flowers in that vase; and instead of suffering all the

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blues to be in one lump, and all the reds in another, and the whites spotted about so as to confuse the whole, if you advance the white rose so, and relieve it with the fine purple of the stock, which blends so beautifully with the damask of this dark rose, then let the lark-spur feather upwards, and the lily crown the whole like a queen as she is! you have at once a charming bouquet of perfume and beauty: let some of the green leaves remain, I conjure you—they are nature's drapery to her flowers."

"I remember how you loved flowers, cousin," said Aunt Tart; "and I ought to have arranged these."

"Not a bit of it: it ought to be the young ladies' delight. Ah, when the Whisperer comes, and is understood and appreciated, these things will be felt and done! Now, Miss Clementine, instead of pulling your fingers, or twisting them into 'fox and geese,' suppose you arrange this work-box," and by a dexterous and rapid movement Cousin Jacob upset a work-box, whose unsettled "state" had been an inconceivable annoyance to Aunt Tart for many previous days. She had talked at and of the box, but did not like to do what Cousin Jacob did; indeed poor

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Aunt Tart would never have thought of tossing the things on the floor, and then insisting that order should be produced out of chaos.

"Now, when the room assumes a well-ordered English look, combining comfort and elegance," quoth Cousin Jacob; "when the flowers look fresh and happy, as they deserve to do, and the broad sunlight is softened by a judicious drawing down of blinds and folding of curtains —when the mignionette-box is placed in the window, so that the air will waft its perfume as it enters—when the lark is either liberated or —(Miss Clementine, it is yours, I believe)—is nicely cleaned and cared for, and supplied with a fresh turf—when the ladies gather round the work-table; and Edward, properly brushed, instead of wearing his hair either furze-bush fashion, or streaked down with oil to save brushing—comes clean and trim, with polished nails, and teeth like ivory, and sits quietly and calmly, I shall be ready to tell of the Whisperer, or of all the Whisperers I have known, and teach those whom Cousin Jacob loves to cherish the Whisperer, whom, if they have heard him at all, they have refused to listen to, or treated with the inattention which, I

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am sorry to observe, they have exhibited towards many things already.

"Ah, my dears!" continued the old gentleman, "I know you all thoroughly. I was obliged to act the part of both father and mother to my own children. I got masters, governesses, tutors of all kinds; but they did not, could not, see what I saw, or feel as I felt: I never did much good until I got them to listen to and understand the Whisperer!"

It was quite curious to see how anxious and active the children became under their aged cousin's direction; and yet his mode of tuition was very singular: he was ten times more particular than Miss Tart, but he was not nervous or anxious. What she would have requested, intreated, to be done, and the young people would have "dawdled" about, or not heeded, Cousin Jacob, in his own quaint, peculiar way, commanded, and it was done at once. Edward knew that Cousin Jacob and Aunt Tart were their guardians; and he saw there was no "way" to "manage" Cousin Jacob: what he wanted to be done, must be done, and at once; and yet he never said "you shall," though "you shall" beamed in his bright, restless, all-seeing eyes.

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Isabella came down to breakfast one morning with the torn gathers of her frock "tucked" under the waist-ribbon. Aunt Tart was distressed, and with her usual amiability began to "get at" how she was to tell her about it—fussing, and sighing, and groaning all the time. Cousin Jacob inserted his finger in the rent, tearing it down, then opening the parlour door, he bowed profoundly to the young lady, and assured her that he was delighted to see she felt the Whisperer's suggestion in its right sense, and would not dream of eating her breakfast in a tattered dress.

Poor Edward had been spoken to for days and days by his aunt as to the absolute necessity there was for invariably washing his hands before dinner. The eagle-eye of Cousin Jacob detected at once the want of attention on this point. Just as they were seated at table, servants in attendance, and the covers about to be removed, he arose suddenly: every one inquired "What he wanted?"—"Was he ill?"—"Could anything be got for him?" No; but he was unhappy: he would return in a minute. The old gentleman mounted nimbly up stairs, and in little more than a minute came as nimbly down, bearing a wash-hand basin, towel,

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soap, everything necessary, placed them gravely before Edward, begging him to comply with the suggestion of the Whisperer—to wash and be clean!

Oh how Edward's cheeks burned—how he intreated permission to go up stairs—how wretched good Aunt Tart looked—how impossible for the servants, who saw only the caricature, and did not comprehend the delicate nature of the reproof, to avoid tittering! At last they all looked at the ceiling, while Cousin Jacob continued as grave as a judge!

Aunt Tart—dear, good Aunt Tart—felt so much for her darling, that she was about to cry; but at last the absurdity of the little scene struck her, and she laughed outright.

"What!" exclaimed Edward, half-indignant and half-abashed—"what, dear aunt; you laugh at me!—'*Et tu Brute!*'"

The old footman did not understand the quotation, for he told the cook that "Young gentlemen were come to a pretty pass, not like what they used to be. Master Edward did the same thing as call his aunt (with whom he (the old footman) had lived in more than comfort for twenty years) a brute!"

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And when the housemaid told the ladies'-maid of Master Edward's inconsideration and want of manners, and it "somehow" got echoed back to Miss Tart, that good lady explained it, and gave the maid the Roman history to read; but the explanation failed to convince the servants of their want of understanding, and, with one and all, Edward became decidedly unpopular.

One evening Cousin Jacob began, without having been asked to do so, to tell, much to Edward's delight, about the Horse Whisperer. The old gentleman had a rapid way not only of uttering words, but conveying ideas. He was so sudden and abrupt in all he said and did—he, as Clementine observed, "pounced upon everything so"—that the young folk had got into a habit not only of watching him, but of watching themselves, which improved them very much.

Aunt Tart said "they were not like the same." Edward's cheeks shone again with all the rubbing and scrubbing he gave them; his hair, which was really beautiful, looked as it ought to do; and he showed with great triumph to his sisters the "half-moon" on every nail.

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If his elbows were on the table when his cousin entered, he removed them instantly, and down they went into their natural position.

But I am rambling in a way which I am sure Cousin Jacob, were he here, would not approve.

"You asked me about the Horse Whisperer, cousins," he startled them by saying, for he had been looking fixedly out on the lawn; "and seeing a groom in the next field march up to a pony, and take him by the ear, has reminded me of it. When I was a lad—(I did *not* kick the table, Edward, with the left foot, and then kick *at* the bar of the chair with the right)—when I was a lad, I spent my college vacations with a dear friend of my poor father's in Ireland. He was a kind-hearted gentleman, who had gone out with my father to India. He returned to take possession of a *nominal* estate in the Emerald Isle: my father remained to make an actual fortune in India. My friend was very kind. As I told you, I spent my holidays with him—the holidays of a schoolboy—the vacation of a college youth. Well—(Isabella, it would be better to push up both your shoulders, and get your dress fairly off at once. It must be very inconvenient to keep up one. Poor young lady, I quite sym-

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pathise with you !)—well, in those days I loved horses, as Edward does. I never was happy except when my neck was in danger. There was a horse called *Comet*, that Mr O'Brien had bought at a very large price. It was a superb creature, but no one could keep on its back: my friend, captivated by its beauty, never dreamed of its uselessness. All the mighty Nimrods came from far to try their power or their skill; but the animal treated them with contempt, and kept them all at bay. When we went into his stall, or rather into his stable, for few had the courage to venture near his 'stall,' back went his ears, round came his eye to the corner—you could see that eye flash like lightning—and the nostril distend, then collapse, then distend; his lips would quiver, and the very muscles of his beautiful limbs prepare, as it were, for action: he bit, he kicked, he reared —he was utterly unmanageable. 'So much for mere beauty!' exclaimed my friend, after witnessing the ease with which the best jockey in the kingdom was thrown—(he had got up by stratagem)—while the horse scoured the meadow like a whirlwind. 'So much for—nothing but beauty!' he repeated; and—Cousin

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Clementine, permit me"—— Cousin Jacob arose, and endeavoured to get down the pier-glass that was fastened between the windows.

"What are you doing?" inquired Miss Tart. "And to stop at that interesting point!"

"Why, don't you see how hardly poor Clementine was trying to look at herself in the glass? To admire, doubtless, the twist of the ringlet she has been greasing her fingers with during the last five minutes. Well, my dear, since I cannot manage that for you, permit me to place your chair directly opposite the glass: there now, you can see without practising those distortions which are so painful to look at."

Poor Clementine blushed, and fidgetted, and looked very foolish, and assured her cousin she did not want to look in the glass at all. And he most politely assured her that he did not wish to contradict her, but it was very extraordinary indeed she should try so hard to do what she did not want to do! It was very odd! Now he would continue.

"Mr O'Brien, as I have told you, said 'So much for *nothing* but beauty!' I myself thought it an excellent thing to remember—a lesson against estimating beauty too highly.

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'I make *bould* to tell ye, master,' said his little groom, Johnny Fagin, who had been in the world, according to his own statement, 'since the year one;' and the poor little fellow was lame, and nearly blind, and his little head, round which the white hair was closely cropped, looked like a snowball on a crooked stick—'I tell ye what, master, the only cure for that horse is the Whisperer.' My friend had a habit of saying 'Psha!' to anything he either did not understand or disbelieved, and the P trembled on his lips; but I daresay the word Whisperer suggested something particular; and, moreover, as he lived in the hope of growing old, he remembered it would not be wise to treat those who were old already with disrespect; and so he said, 'Johnny, you are, I daresay, wiser than I am upon this subject, but I have no faith in that man: to be sure I never saw him'"——

"I beg your pardon, Cousin Jacob," interrupted Edward—who, ten days previously, would have interrupted any one *without* saying "I beg your pardon"—"but I thought you observed he had suggested something to Mr O'Brien?"

"Not the Horse Whisperer, my dear boy—Mr

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O'Brien at that time had never seen *him;* but he had his Whisperer, just as I have mine. Yes, yes, poor fellow! he—had—his—Whis-per-er, and a bitter one he was—bitter, but true!" Cousin Jacob paused, and rubbed his eyebrow with the forefinger of his right hand, as he always did when he pondered on a subject; and no one recalled him to it, for they were thinking that the Whisperer must be a sort of familiar—a little domestic spirit—and felt rather uncomfortable at the idea.

"Well, my dear little cousins, my friend looked at the beautiful ungovernable horse, and wished he had never bought it; but Johnny kept near his master, telling wonderful tales of the Horse Whisperer, in this fashion—

"'Deed, sir, he'd tame him. Didn't I know him shut up in a stable for not twenty minutes with Mr Tim Morris's *Roving Blade,* who broke more necks than ere a horse in the county, and the light of whose eye would set fire to a haystack?'"

Cousin Jacob mimicked the Irish accent so well, that the children laughed in merry chorus.

"'Ay, your honour; and when he came out, didn't he take the smiling darling of a *babby,* Miss

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Emmy Morris, out of her nurse's arms, and seat her on the saddle? and didn't the baste walk like a lamb, and as *study* as a judge, with her—an' she, the jewel! crowing like forty game-cocks with delight? And there was Jenny Howlin's gray mare, that kick't the world before as well as behind her; not a trace or a bridle-rein in the county would *hould her.* Well, ten minutes made her right, so that she'd all as one as *ask* to be harnessed.'

"Old Johnny called this mode of telling stories *firing guns at the master;* and after each shot he waited to see if it made an impression.

"Mr O'Brien remained leaning over the gate with folded arms, watching the proud horse which cost him so much money and anxiety, and old Johnny, a little *dwarfed* man, wandering, as it were, around him.

"'Think of it, master dear! It's a desperate pity to let anything so noble as that fine animal go altogether to the bad, just by having its own way! Too much of *that* is the worst that can happen man or beast. Look at the crest of his neck, arched for all the world like a rainbow; look at the straightness of his limbs—his

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little ears, twinkling like stars; and his nostril! 'deed your own, sir, could not tell out finer at a new canister of Cork snuff—humbly asking your honour's pardon!'"

"Oh, I should so like little Old Johnny!" exclaimed Edward in delight.

"And he deserved to be liked," replied Cousin Jacob; "but not exactly for the reason you imagine—because he was a free and fearless jester—but because he was almost as useful to his master as the Whisperer himself. Johnny was a devoted *truth-teller*, using the privilege of ancient service to watch and guard his master's interests. I often wondered in my boyhood how anything so old, and withered, and feeble, could be so useful; and learned—(thanks to the Whisperer)—to estimate the more homely virtues by reading the fidelity and truth of Old Johnny. But I must continue—

"'I tell you,' said his master, turning his portly person round full upon his ancient servitor—'I tell you he is an impostor: he would *whisper* anything for money!'

"'No, your honour, he would not; and it isn't the money he cares half so much for, though he can't live no more than the rest of us with-

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out money, *barring it's on credit*, and that's ruin —no, sir, he has fine feeling and honour: he breaks in every one of the O'Donoughoos' horses, and never closed his hand on their coin, just because they are of a noble family, though poor. And when Mr Speen sent for him, and by way of a jest wanted to shut him into a stable to whisper an ass, not all the glitter of his *goold* could get him to lay finger near the horse he really wanted cured: but do as you like, master, he'll touch none of your money unless he cures your horse; that's one thing.'

"The end of it was, my friend sent for the Whisperer. I remember watching every horse that came down the avenue the morning he was expected, and even galloping to the cross-roads to look out. Mr O'Brien himself was a little anxious or curious, perhaps both: he walked to the window several times, pretending to scan which way the wind blew, and threw up the sash. He was restless and impatient, and I was ten times worse. I had pictured to myself a pale, keen-eyed, thin man, in a black coat, something like a picture I had seen of a German student. It was very ridiculous to imagine, that because the Whisperer was clever

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and powerful (in his way) he must *seem* so. I have since learned that clever—really clever —people never seek to appear what they are: they leave that to others to discover. Well, I was in a perfect fever of excitement to see this man: I could not sleep for thinking of him; and kept asking every one I met '*if he were come?*' Evening approached: I was weary with watching, and resolved to be the first to see him. I still watched, just—as—as—as—oh! —as these young ladies did for their new bonnets, spending the whole day in watching—not working! At last I climbed to the top of a mount which overlooked the high road, and I suppose over-fatigue sent me to sleep. I was awoke by some one poking me with a long stick. 'Is he come?' I exclaimed, jumping up.

"A stranger stood beside me, dressed in a coat and waistcoat of coarse blue cloth, while his rough stockings and high-fronted shoes proclaimed him a country farmer. Without noticing my inquiry, he said that somehow he had lost his way, and did not like going down the avenue without asking if that was Mr O'Brien's. This was said in rich, rolling, merry brogue, and the speaker looked, as my friend Edward would

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say in his *elegant* manner, as 'jolly' a farmer, 'rough, red, and ruddy,' as you could meet behind a plough, or with a hay-fork on his shoulder. Casting another longing look towards the road, which was then illumined by the setting sun, and hearing the preliminary grating or rocking of the great dinner-bell, which always seemed unwilling to be disturbed, or to do its duty, I told the man to come with me, as that was Mr O'Brien's. He carried a stout shillala (what Irishman does not?), but he carried it over his shoulder, and a bundle tied in a handkerchief dangled from it. He told me he had walked a long distance. I was not in a good-humour, and so did not reply. He made one or two other observations, and I hardly seemed to hear him—my mind was full of my disappointment. When we got to the house, I pointed the way to the kitchen.

"'No,' he said, 'I want to go to the stables, though it is too late to do anything to-night. I want to see the old groom, Johnny Fagin, immediately.'

"'Have you brought a message from "the Whisperer?"' I eagerly inquired.

"'No, young master, I have not,' he answered;

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'and I think, if I may make bold to say it, a touch from the Whisperer would do you no harm: you seem too much wrapt up in yourself, and too pleased with yourself, to give a civil answer to a poor traveller, who is weary and footsore. In Ireland, when we have nothing else to give, we give the "kindly welcome."'

"'A blunder!' I exclaimed jeeringly. 'You say you have nothing to give, and you have just proved you have something.'

"The man looked annoyed; but after a moment the scowl of contempt passed from his brow, and giving me a gentle, good-humoured pat on the shoulder, which I felt rather inclined to resent than receive as it was intended, he said, not addressing me exactly, 'Nice little creature enough; but he is only a Saxon—quite a foreigner!' and turned away.

"When I entered the dining-room, my friend sat down as usual; and when the dinner was concluded, Old Johnny fidgetted his way into the room—'He's come, sir!' said Johnny significantly—'he's come: young master there showed him the way'——

"'And never told me! Oh fie, Jacob!'

"How shocked I was! I do not know why

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I was so anxious to see the Whisperer. In the country, where people and events come 'few and far between,' every one and everything creates an interest, and my love of horses stimulated my curiosity; but all my anxiety to see him was now merged in the memory of my discourteous behaviour; and when, a few moments after, he was conducted into the room by Johnny, while the little man looked so bright and happy, I sneaked away, ashamed to be seen; and then remembering that it is one of the first duties of a gentleman to acknowledge a fault, I returned, and walking up to the Whisperer, whose name was Sullivan, I said, 'I am very sorry I fancied you a very different person from what you are, and I beg your pardon for having treated you rudely.'

"Mr O'Brien would hear everything that had been said or done; and while I became eloquent on my want of courtesy, the Whisperer suggested excuses, which I did not deserve; until at last Mrs O'Brien called to our mind that the Israelites of old committed their great crime against HIM who came to the lost sheep of their house, because He came in all simplicity, and *not*, as they expected, as a temporal prince: if He had come

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as a conqueror, with pomp and pride, they would have received Him. 'My little friend Jacob will, I hope, remember in future,' she said, 'to be courteous to all, and to give offence willingly to none: that is a law from God to man. It is not because of this one's fortune, or the other one's talent, that we are to be generally hospitable and kind; but because we are all brethren. There are degrees in showing kindness; but every human being, whether clothed in purple or penury, has a *right* to human sympathy and kindness from his fellow-creatures.'

"We all accompanied the Whisperer the next morning to Comet's stable: the horse laid back his ears, and brought his flashing eye round to the corner, so as to look at his visitors. When the groom went near his stall, he struck out at him, and his flesh quivered with eagerness to destroy whatever came within his reach. It was something quite terrible to see anything so full of beauty so destructive. 'Not so bad a case as I have had,' said Sullivan in a calm tone. The horse turned round his head to look at him. The Whisperer went deliberately up, and laid his hand on his shoulder. How his ears twinkled and his nostrils swelled! but he did not attempt to injure

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him. At an understood signal we left the stable, and soon heard the key turned. 'I should so like to peep!' said some one"——

"No, indeed, Clementine, it was not Cousin Jacob who said that; Cousin Jacob was not mean"——

"'Whoever attempted that,' replied Mr O'Brien sternly, 'could not continue in my house. *The person who would steal a secret, would steal a purse, but for fear of the law.*'"

"Then you have no idea what he did?" said Miss Tart.

"Not in the least. We waited as impatiently as Edward did for the dessert the other day, when that universal domestic torment, "Mr Nobody," lost the key of the store-closet; but perhaps in little more than half an hour the Whisperer opened the door, and requested us to enter. The horse was standing certainly—and yet how he stood was a wonder—for he trembled in every limb; his glossy coat was saturated as if he had been in a river, the fire of his eye was subdued, his ears remained firm, and the curve of his nostril was undisturbed by any emotion.

"'Will you mount him, sir?' inquired the Whisperer

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"My friend was astonished. 'Pray do, sir. He will be as gentle as a lamb, as swift as an arrow, and as certain, sir, as DEATH: pray mount him.'

"The Whisperer went towards him; every hair quivered: he told him to lie down: in a moment his graceful limbs bent, and he was at his conqueror's feet, as tame and obedient as a dog. The man sat down on him, passed his arm round his neck, and invited us to do the same. I, who had looked upon him from afar, and watched his movements as I would have watched a flash of lightning, lifted his head, and laid it on my knee. At last my friend, convinced that the Whisperer had performed his promise, and that the horse was conquered, mounted him, and rode some twenty miles without checking bridle.

"'If ever he should forget himself,' said the Whisperer, 'I hope your honour will send for me, and I will charge nothing for my second visit.'

"I have no doubt now that the animal was conquered by some sudden terror, and brought thus in a moment under subjection. The uneducated attributed the Whisperer's power

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to supernatural influence; the educated could not account for it. It was quite amusing to see the quiet smile and twinkling eyes of the magician while each person present speculated upon the 'how' he managed to tame the Bucephalus."

"And was the horse really tamed—'broken in'—as they say?" inquired Edward.

"He certainly was," answered Cousin Jacob.

"Some five years afterwards he had a relapse. The Whisperer then was an old man, and it was reported that his power had declined with his years; but my friend wrote me word that the horse absolutely knew the sound of his footstep as he entered the stable. There was no necessity for *whispering* that time—his presence was quite sufficient to produce the same effects, which continued to operate until the animal's death."

"Did he never tell his secret? I would have given him any money for it," said Edward.

"An unlimited sort of offer," observed Cousin Jacob with his little fidgetty smile; "and one you are quite safe in making, considering the man was dead long before you were born. But he left his secret, it was said, to his son, who practised without ever attaining the same

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power. Both father and son, however, refused to sell their secret."

"Do you know any other story about Whisperers?" inquired Isabella.

"Your own Whisperer!" suggested Clementine.

"I will tell you all about my own peculiar Whisperer one day or another," replied Cousin Jacob; "but in the meantime answer Isabella's question by saying that, stimulated, I imagine, by the success of one Whisperer, I went to see the operations of another. I take it for granted, young ladies and gentleman, you all know what a Bee is. I do *not* suppose you have obtained your knowledge of this marvellous little insect by the foolish nursery rhyme of

'God made man, and man made money;
God made the bees, and the bees made honey.'

Or merely by an acquaintance with 'A bee in your bonnet,' which is frequently a very troublesome affair. I would rather presume that your first acquaintance with that insect is to be traced to a poem which was engraved upon my own heart in childhood, and remains there still, commencing—

'How doth the little busy bee.'

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Can you go on, Clementine?"

Clementine could, and so could Isabella, and so could Edward, and Miss Tart; and they went on repeating that immortal poem of Dr Watts, and commenting on its truth and beauty, until suddenly Edward thrust in a line of something else, which sounded so oddly, that they all laughed.

"I really do know what bees are," said Aunt Tart. "I cultivated them after the old fashion, which cost me many a heartache. I never ordered a hive to be smothered, that I did not feel something knocking at my heart, and inquiring what *right* I had to destroy the creators of the luxury I was preparing to enjoy?"

"Served you right, cousin," said Jacob; "Esth! served you very right."

Now you must know that as I write it, "E-s-t-h" conveys a very poor idea of the hissing contemptuous noise the old gentleman produced when anything either occurred or was said which he very much disliked. He could endure a great deal without saying or rather hissing "esth;" it was well known that when Cousin Jacob said "esth," he was marvellously disturbed.

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"Every one did so," observed Aunt Tart in her meekest voice.

"Cousin Emmeline, that 'Everybody' is as un-get-at-able a body as 'Nobody;' and I take it no precedent for a rational being to follow. If one Mr Everybody commenced cutting the other Mr Everybody's throat, is that a reason why Mr Anybody should do the same thing? Esth! we are a nation of pilferers! Oh, you may smile, young ladies; but we are! Pretty people we are indeed to be proud of ourselves!—committing, as we do hourly, outrages against nature and her laws. I am not speaking of those great historic crimes which stain the pages of the past. No, no! I am thinking of the present—the daily cruelties we practise. What right have we to urge the horse into the agonies of a steeple-chase? God gave us the noble animal to assist and facilitate our labours—not as the instrument of mere heartless amusement — esth! I cannot stroll down a green lane without hearing some brainless fellow fire off a gun—not to gain or give bread, but to destroy a singing bird, or useful rook, who ought to be considered the farmer's friend instead of being treated as his enemy. In the

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city, injustice and cruelty meet one in every street! Look at our overloaded and over-driven omnibuses! Look, if you can, into the close cellars and noisome attics, where hundreds of our fellow-creatures live to starve, and starve to live! Look at our thoughtless women of fashion, careless of the unreasonableness of their demands, and compelling the dress to be sent to-morrow, without thinking that to do it the dressmaker must sit up all night as well as work all day! Look at the little misses and masters stuffing all day long, and tiffing with good plain food, heedless of the children who cry for the crumbs 'which fall from the rich man's table!' Look at our overheated shops, where white slaves stand and toil for fifteen and sixteen hours out of the twenty-four! —Esth! Bah! but my heart and eyes ache from looking! I wonder, Cousin Emmeline, you are not haunted by the ghosts of the bees you smothered! I have heard of being kicked to death by crickets—stung to death by bees would be a more fitting death for you!"

"I am sure, Cousin Jacob," replied poor Miss Tart, "you used to *eat* the honey; I think you deserved some of the stings."

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"I am sure I did," he answered; "for in those times people committed all manner of unkindness, not to say cruelty, from want of thought. I am willing that the finer, the more sensitive emotions of our nature, should be brought into subjection by reason. I know that it is necessary oxen should be killed; but let them be treated with humanity until the deathblow is given. I know that the poor must labour—and, by the way, so must the rich, if they would be either healthy or happy—but let kindness and sympathy sweeten their needful toil, which is altogether different from that which the rich inflict upon themselves. Ah, Clementine! not the most industrious, but the hardest-working family I know, consists of five young ladies and their mamma, who reside in a certain fashionable Square. They go to three parties in one night, besides dropping in at bits and scraps of concerts, and plays, and operas, and shops, and horticultural fêtes, and fashionable lectures, and simpering bazaars, and park-driving, and sales." Cousin Jacob paused in his enumeration of fashionable dissipation simply for want of breath, and after a deep-drawn sigh, continued—"And that never get to bed until four in the morning;

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and they think it so necessary to be seen everywhere, that their morning visiting and correspondence would tire out a troop of horse, and exhaust a legion of secretaries! And yet they get through it—grumbling all the time at their engagements, and looking pale and discontented, except when floating in new dresses for particular occasions. Their servants get into the same habits, and then they rate them for doing as they do; they never treat their dependants with consideration, and their dependants merely look upon them as—persons to pay them their wages. Oh the good old times! when young ladies took care of the roses on their cheeks by cultivating the roses in their garden, when"——

"Cousin Jacob," interrupted Aunt Tart, "you ramble away from a subject in a very extraordinary manner. You were going, I think, to tell us something about—— I really forget; what was it, Edward?"

"Was it dogs?" inquired Edward, who often replied to one question by asking another.

"No," said Isabel; "it was something about bees. You said your curiosity was stimulated, and then you stimulated ours by a hint, and then away you went."

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"I am an unsatisfactory old fellow altogether," replied Cousin Jacob; "but I remember intending to tell you of an idiot boy who had as much power over bees as the Whisperer had over horses. He was called by the country people 'Billy the Burr,' I suppose from a habit he had of 'burring' with his lips, or perhaps his tongue. I have seen him go under a swarm of bees, hanging from the bough of an apple-tree, bu-rr—or, if you please to call it so, pur-r—round it, putting his face quite close to the insects, and reducing his burr to a whisper; and in a few minutes the swarm would transfer itself to his head and shoulders—hanging around him like one of those flowing wigs that *decorated* (according to the monstrous fashion of the times) the heads and shoulders of our beaux and gallant gentlemen in the reign of Charles II. He would shake them off on a white cloth, tumble the pugnacious insects over and over with his hands, pick out the queen-bee, and drop her quietly into the empty hive, which had been prepared for the purpose with cross sticks, and rubbed with cream and bean-blossoms—well assured that her loyal and faithful servants would follow their sovereign lady and

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mistress. He would 'whisper'—'*burring*'—round and round a hive that was full of honey, and the bees would crowd to him, so that not one remained in the hive, which was frequently removed, and another put in its place by the thrifty housewife; thus anticipating the humane projects of Mr Nott—preserving both bees and honey.

"It was very singular to see this simple creature, apparently so devoid of intellect—to observe how he shuffled up to the beehive, seating himself directly in front of it, stretching out his arms caressingly towards it, burring at first loudly, then drawing nearer, and breathing upon it; then pressing his arms round it, and with half-closed eyes moving his head up and down, and around, as you see bird-fanciers do to their bullfinches when they require them to pipe; then tapping first one side, and then the other, with his huge, half-powerless fingers; then whispering and murmuring, and all the time the bees crawling out and over him. If they came slowly, he would sometimes get impatient, and turn over the hive at once between his knees, upon which there was a great commotion, and considerable remonstrance, but there were no stings!"

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"Was he questioned, cousin, as to his power over the bee portion of the insect world?" inquired Miss Tart.

"Oh yes; but his replies were far more unsatisfactory than his proceedings—'Oh yes! I know de bees: I whisper dem what I want: dey love an' trust me, and in coorse do what I tell 'um. Dey know Billy'"——

"There was a great text in that simple sentence," said Miss Tart. "'They love and trust me, and of course do what I tell them.' A great number of persons profess to love and to trust, and yet will not do what they are told."

"Aunt Tart," observed Edward—and while he spoke, the colour mounted to his very brow—"I am sure I try with all my might and main to please you; I do indeed, and I am sure my sisters have the same desire. And you know, dear aunty, when a *cove*—I beg your pardon, I mean a *fellow*—I beg your pardon again—I would say, when a boy has an earnest desire to please, I think he will sooner or later find the way. I wish I had never talked slang—it sticks to my tongue as the thistle-burr stuck to your shawl the other morning; and I do see the absurdity of going to be educated by gentlemen and scho-

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lars, and yet adopting the language of the stable and the streets."

"Better save the expense, and go as a stable-boy at once!" exclaimed Cousin Jacob. "I really think, if our youth go on as they have been going, in twenty years there will not be a gentleman in England. The *tone* of society has sunk—the world is out of tune. Instead of endeavouring to draw the people up to our own level, we are grovellingly content with descending to theirs. It's all wrong: it's all—all wrong!" repeated Cousin Jacob, shaking his head. "You may depend upon it it's all wrong! Those who abandon the good-breeding of gentlemen, ought also to be prepared to lay down their position and fortune. How would you like *that*, Master Edward? And as to the young ladies"——

"Indeed, Cousin Jacob," interrupted Aunt Tart, "they are so much improved, that I do not like to see your eyes twinkling like stars on a cold frosty night, as they always do when you are going to tell them what is right."

"We always know when Cousin Jacob is about to reprimand us by the corners of his mouth," said Clementine.

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"Or the manner in which he elevates his eyebrow—so!" half whispered Isabel, blushing at her own boldness, and shrugging out her shoulder a very little bit at the same time in a sort of nervous manner.

Cousin Jacob drew down his brows, and tried to look very terrible; but he only looked very odd, and very unlike any one else.

"I do not like to have to do with spoiled children," he said; "it is not pleasant. My own—now scattered far and wide; some in China, some in India, but the greater number where we all hope to be when the Almighty calls us away from this world—they were good, pious children; and the best went first, as it is ever right they should. Cousin Emmeline remembers hearing much of some of them: they all knew the value of the Whisperer. They knew the advantage I derived from him, and they were all prepared to treat his councils with respect."

"The Horse Whisperer?" inquired Edward.

"No, although the horse is sometimes more docile than the man."

"The Bee Whisperer?" said Isabel.

"No: the Whisperer I mean has little to do

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with bees; that is, I do not know—cannot say that he has anything to do with them, though it is just possible."

"I do not like whispering," said Miss Tart; "and I must say my nieces have avoided it lately in a way that has given me much pleasure."

"Oh the mean, mysterious little whizzy-whizzy that Miss Tattle mutters to Miss Prattle, and which might be shouted upon Mount Ararat without any one being the wiser or the better for it, is so meaningless, so contemptible, so—nothing—that it puts one quite out of temper to see the pretty head of one young miss bobbing its pretty ringlets at the ear of another young miss; and then the whispered to, turns whisperer, and smooths her braids, and bends her head towards her companion; and all this rubbish is as rude as it is senseless. Oh, my WHISPERER is altogether different! Listen, and I will tell you; that is, if you have patience to listen.

"I was one of eleven, nine of whom were boys. We were, like other large families, of mingled dispositions, mingled talents, mingled inclinations. My eldest brother, my poor mother always said, would have achieved high honours

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at college, if he could have passed along a third form at Harrow. Another was a great genius—at least so we all believed: and if he could have thought so himself, he might have been distinguished; but, like all truly great people, he undervalued himself—lived unhappy, and died young."

"His case is a rare one, cousin—is it not?" said Miss Tart.

"Yes," was the reply; "but only because high genius is rare."

"Another, I remember, had a great talent for cutting paper; and two would go into the navy; and one into the army. My sisters were staid, well-behaved young girls—once: they are now gray grandmothers. I believe, when very young, I was the greatest torment my dear mother had."

"There, Aunt Tart!" exclaimed Edward, "there must be some hope for me! You see how good and amiable Cousin Jacob is *now*, yet he was once his mother's 'greatest torment!'"

"I was indeed a great torment; but my dear mother always said I would come right, I so very soon made a friend of the Whisperer. I could hardly tell you when this valuable ac-

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quaintanceship commenced—in my very earliest childhood I should imagine. And, strange as it may seem, at that time, and even in after-life, I had violent struggles with this admirable friend. Many and many a pinch and a pull he gave me; many a time has he *tweaked* me so severely, that I have cried bitter tears; often have I sulked with him, often given him evil words in exchange for those which he bestowed upon me; and that, of all other things for which I ought to feel most grateful, is the fact, that no matter how ill I used him, it never changed his purpose: he was still my faithful, steady, unchanging friend!"

Cousin Jacob paused, and his little, hard features assumed an expression as if he were looking a long, long way back amid the years which youth thinks never pass with sufficient rapidity.

"I remember," he continued, "how very angry I made him once by *stealing* some apples. I was a very tiny fellow, not more than seven years old; but I did know better. Some apples had been promised me by an old gardener, who had gone a journey, and I was so greedy, that I could not wait his return. I remember endea-

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vouring to prove, that as they were promised, my act was simply taking them—nothing more. I remember the long argument I had with my friend; how at one moment I listened to him, and turned from the apples as if they had been puff-balls or bitter chestnuts; and then, the next, forgot everything except the 'rosy cheeks,' and 'sweetwilliams,' and 'brown russets,' that glittered in the sunshine: and when my friend repeated his warning, I took my longing eyes off the apples, and then the sun would again shine on them, and I thrust my friend away on the other side, and rushed headlong into the temptation, reckless and careless. I am even now ashamed to say how I stuffed and pocketed; and how I hurried to my little room hastily, resolved to outstep my friend and shut myself in, and used every possible exertion of which my strength was capable to bolt the door, which, finding impossible, I sat down, not to eat or even watch my apples, but to watch the door; and presently, when my dear, tender, loving mother came in, I pretended to be ill, and asked leave to go to bed—thus one fault always leads to another. How her dear, bright face deepened into anxiety, and her eyes beamed

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so lovingly down on mine that dared not meet her gaze!

"And when she looked round the room, I remember how I feared lest she should smell the apples. She turned down the bed with her own gentle hands, and laid me there. And now really I became ill, between the quantity of apples I had eaten, and terror lest my mother should discover those that were concealed. I longed to lay my cheek against hers, and tell her the whole truth; but I could not, I was terror and shame-stricken. I covered over my head, and when her hand withdrew the sheet, I 'foxed!' She had no sooner left me alone than my friend entered, and overwhelmed me with reproaches. Oh how hard they were to bear! And the more I felt their truth, the deeper was my little heart harrowed! So lowly and softly did he speak, that no one present could have heard a word he said, and yet every sound was to me as the voice of a trumpet. The sour apples did their work of pain also, but that was as naught compared to the eternal *whispering* of my true friend. The moonbeams crept slowly through the trellis of my little window, and chequered the bed with diamonds

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of light. My mother so managed that each of us had a bed of his own, but there were two beds in each room. When my poor brother Richard came in, I was on the very point of doing as the Whisperer wished, and telling him all; but I could not. When assured that he slept, I got up, emptied my little purse upon the bed, counted my store by moonlight, and was thrown into despair when obliged to relinquish the comforting idea that I had sufficient money to pay the old man for the apples. I had not above half the necessary halfpence, and I had thrown away the rest upon some gingerbread."

"Cousin Jacob," said Aunt Tart, "I think you must have been very greedy."

"Too true! My friend tried hard to show me the evil and the crime, but I *was* greedy. I wonder I outlived the quantity of miscellaneous effects with which I used to crowd my unfortunate stomach; but you may depend upon it that much of the sickness of after-life is engendered by the way in which children—boys especially—cram and are crammed. Yes, I *was* decidedly greedy: the Whisperer often told me so—I *was* greedy!

"I believe I might have slept; but my friend

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loved me too well to permit me to sleep soundly when I had done wrong. I remember dreaming that while wandering by the sea-shore, all the lobsters and crabs turned into crab-apples, and pelted me; and the Old Man of the Sea jumped on my back, and suddenly I became aware that *he* was the old gardener. Then I stood in the presence of my father, who was really a magistrate, and I was accused of some dreadful fault; and while there, a voice cried out, 'This comes of apple stealing!' In the morning, my dear mother discovered I was in a high fever; and when the doctor came, he fixed his spectacles firmly on his nose, and then looking above them, while he held my wrist as in a vice, just pronounced the word

"'Apples!'

"'Now or never,' whispered my friend; and I exclaimed, 'Sir, they are under the bed!'

"'I knew it,' he said with the utmost composure.

"My mother declared it was impossible; that I had no means of obtaining apples; that there were no apples in the house; and then, circling my arms round her neck, and hiding my burning face in her bosom, I told her the

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whole truth, flung my little purse into her lap, and said I would sacrifice all my pocket-money until the debt to the old man was paid. Oh how my friend patted me on the back, and how often I repeated the little evening prayer I had not courage to say the previous night, with the morning one—first one, and then the other; and though I felt so bitterly ashamed at taking back the apples, which both my mother and my friend insisted I should do"——

"Ah!" interrupted Isabel, "I know who your Whisperer was, Cousin Jacob: *it* was—*he* was—your mother! Just the same as Aunt Tart—she used to keep for ever on, and on, when we did anything wrong—just like that."

"Like what, most intelligent Isabella? Your shoulder, I perceive, is making the same inquiry—popping up considerably above your dress. What a spirit of investigation!"

"There now, my shoulder is down, and straight, and proper," said Isabella, blushing and laughing. "But now, Cousin Jacob, was it *not* your mother?"

"No, Isabella: don't you see," observed Clementine, "that it could not have been his mother, because Cousin Jacob said she went

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away when the other came: they could not have been together!"

"Now you two girls are mystifying the whole," said Edward rudely. "Mystifying and stupifying—confounding persons and English"——

"You are so conceited, brother!" exclaimed both sisters at the same moment.

"Hush—h—h!" said Miss Tart, extending her hands in a supplicating attitude. "Hush—h, my beloved ones. Now, no quarrelling."

"Indeed, aunt, it was not I; but these girls are always so obstinate."

"Not we, indeed, Cousin Jacob; but Edward is so"——

"So what?" inquired Edward fiercely.

"Oh, we do not want to quarrel!"

"Now, Isabella — Clementine — you always say *that* just as you are going to begin!"

"Begin what, brother?"

Cousin Jacob would not permit another retort, but ran on as fast as possible into a most ridiculous history, in which he mingled moonshine and marbles; flying into a dissertation on moral philosophy; an essay on good-manners, politeness, moderation, and discretion; on the forbear-

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ance and tenderness a brother owes his sister, and the forbearance and tenderness the sister owes the brother; concluding with illustrations and examples of domestic love and felicity, as practised by Master Edward and the Misses Isabel and Clementine, who never looked daggers at each other—never spoke rude words to each other—never forgot that they, being children of God, much less children of the same parents, were bound to bear and forbear, and sweeten the cup of life as it passed from lip to lip.

"Now, Cousin Jacob," interrupted Miss Tart, who sat twitching nervously at her gold chain, "you have gone"——

"Only after these young folks' tempers, believe me," said the little old man with an expression of countenance which, more than even his words, recalled the "young folk" to a consciousness of their rudeness to each other.

"Yes; I saw that these invaluable commodities, these necessary ingredients for domestic happiness—the three tempers of my invaluable little friends—had disappeared in a whirlwind; but now that they are come back again, I really may continue"——

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"Perhaps better not—better not," said Aunt Tart doubtingly, and giving her chain a pull which proved its strength. "You really, I must say, Cousin Jacob, make it very complicated and obscure; and as to myself, I have not the most remote idea of what you mean. When I was a girl, I had a very pretty—yes, and a very quick—knack of making out riddles. I made nothing of 'Humpy Dumpy;' I daresay you remember how he sat on a wall: and I could not have been ten when I guessed 'Going to St Ives' in three guesses! But this '*it*,' this '*friend*' of yours, is more perplexing than 'A herring and a-half for fourpence, how many for a penny?' No, that is not right," added dear, simple Miss Tart, while an air of exceeding perplexity disturbed her kind and innocent face—"no: well, it does not much matter. You naughty things, I daresay you know it very well, only you will not tell!"

The three young people laughed at Aunt Tart's perplexity; and good-humour being perfectly restored by the good sense of Cousin Jacob, who knew the blessing of silence when the temper is irritated, the old gentleman invited the young one to take a walk, while, as

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he said, the ladies attended to the little household matters, which, instead of being a trouble to those whose minds are well regulated, form one of the chief of woman's pleasures.

"I wish, Cousin Jacob," said the boy, "I wish Aunt Tart was *clever!*"

"What do you mean by clever?" inquired Cousin Jacob.

"Why, I do not know exactly," he replied. "I cannot quite tell; but it is being quick and sharp, you know, and learned."

"Quick, sharp, and learned," repeated the old man. "Oh, that is cleverness!—is it?"

"Yes, Cousin Jacob; I think so."

"Well, I do not think your aunt is '*slow.*' She is an early riser, and everything she controls is done in time, and at time. 'Sharp'—that is to say, bitter, pointed, cunning, severe—she is not certainly. Should you wish her to be so? Should you love her better if she were so? Do you think things would go on better for her own health, spirits, or advantage, or for yours, if Aunt Tart were sharp, bitter, pointed, cunning, or severe?"

"No, Cousin Jacob."

"Well, 'learned.' Do you think it well for a

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woman to be able to read both Latin and Greek, and solve problems?"

Edward laughed. "No, cousin, that would *be a go;* but I beg pardon—I did not mean to use any slang, and I really do not know why I said that about aunt wanting cleverness: it was very wicked of me."

"Not at all, boy—not at all! It is the fashion of the day to overvalue, particularly in women, what is called *cleverness*, and to *undervalue* goodness. Miss Tart is simple, because purely-minded. She is so truthful herself, that she never suspects untruthfulness in others; and her advice is always admirable; if you and your sisters do not mind it, the fault is *yours*, not *hers;* it is, moreover, given with an earnestness and affection which make it, or ought to make it, of double value, whereas it only excites your mirth."

"But, cousin," suggested Edward, "surely *you* thought Aunt Tart did not manage us properly, or you would not have *trotted us out so*—I mean, managed us differently—you know."

"Seriously, my boy, I do not think Aunt Tart managed you properly. If you had had the good fortune to be under her management when

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you were babies, she would have brought you up without suffering you to have been contaminated by the carelessness and vulgarity you have, unknowingly to yourselves, imbibed, and which the straightforward nature of your loving aunt did not know how to overcome. You had not learned the first grand duty which a little child owes its parents—UNREASONING OBEDIENCE! You longed to reason, and to argue, and thought it a grand thing to have a quick reply ready at all times. As long as the answer was quick, you imagined your aunt put down"——

"No, cousin," said the boy; "I never wished to put her down—never thought it! I liked to have an answer ready, I own; but indeed I never saw her gentle, sweet face look pained without being ashamed of myself."

"Good!" muttered Cousin Jacob; "that was ve—ry good! She *may* puzzle over a herring and a-half for three-halfpence; but she never puzzles over the difference between right and wrong, and never gave advice to you or your sisters that was not for your advantage; and it was only the excess of your bad bringing up and vulgarity"—(Edward coloured up to the very roots of the hair which clustered over

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his forehead)—"that made you feel her wholesome doctrines painful. She is almost everything a woman ought to be! It is the very excess of her goodness that makes her so anxious about you! A bundle of plagues as you are!—how any elderly maiden lady could be so self-sacrificing as to immolate herself at such a shrine, and devote her latter years to tame a pair of Tomboys in petticoats, and admit a—a—hobbledehoy during his holidays, I cannot understand! And then the pert jackanapes wishes she was clever!"

"Cousin Jacob," said Edward, "I wanted to make a friend of you: you make me call you cousin, though I am so much younger. You are sometimes so good as to treat me better than I deserve—always!—but sometimes like a real friend; and when I used that unfortunate expression about Aunt Tart, it was because I was going to open my heart to you. A fellow like me, who has no brothers, picks up his friends at school, and doesn't like, or understand how, to tell an aunt everything. And as to sisters—why, mine are such queer girls, they rather set themselves against me than want my friendship. I am sure it was, as you and Aunt Tart say,

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wrong at first, and we must be great troubles to aunty and you to set right; but I hope we shall come so at last. Only, if you would let me speak out from my heart frankly, and not take me up short"——

"Ah—ah!" exclaimed Cousin Jacob, rubbing his hands gleefully, "see there; he does not like being taken up *short*, and yet he never minded taking others up"——

The boy looked at his cousin. "Ah, sir," he said, "I do indeed desire to do right in every way. Indeed I do! And if you will be my friend, I will not keep a thought hid away anywhere from you. I will let you see all—the bad and the good together—only it does so cut me, when I tell you what I really think, to be laughed at! I do not like that—I do not; and I don't think it quite kind. I try to do as other boys; and—and"——

The old friend of his own choosing clapped him on the shoulder, and exclaimed, "Out with it! Never keep in what you feel you *ought* to let out—never do *that;* and never give a half-confidence."

"What do you mean by a half-confidence, cousin?"

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"When you tell anything to a friend, tell *all* —or how can he give you advice, or judge of the right or wrong of the case you put? If you say, 'Tom threw a stone at my dog, and broke his leg,' you leave an impression that Tom is a cruel boy; but if you say, 'Tom threw a stone at my dog, and broke its leg, because I had thrown stones at his dog before,' I should say you provoked Tom, and have no complaint to make, though you have proved yourselves unworthy, inasmuch as you attacked the poor unoffending animals when you ought rather to have attacked each other. But if you say that Tom set on his dog at you in the first instance, and you feared the dog, and endeavoured to keep it off, then that alters the aspect of affairs again; and—— But you see now what I mean; so, if you please, we will go back to the 'and—and;' and the propensity, by no means peculiar to you—to do as others do, without considering whether it be wrong or right. We all more or less go on, like turnspits on the wheel, or horses in a mill, or carriages in the Hyde Park drive, or sheep on a common. Fashion or custom sets up a leader, and then we all play at 'Follow my leader' until fashion pushes some one else to

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the point of distinction, and then we desert the old, and adopt the new in the same unreasoning manner. Now, my boy, the 'and—and'"——

"You will laugh at me?"

"I will *not* laugh at you, Ned, unless I think it the best way of curing you of absurdities or bad habits. There are some faults too trivial to be reasoned against, and yet they are so much in the way of a young person's appearance or advancement, that the best way is to set them before him in the ridiculous light in which they appear to others: but those who cannot bear to be laughed at, do not of course laugh at others."

"That's the thing—the very thing, Cousin Jacob," exclaimed Edward earnestly—"the and—and—I am really ashamed—quite ashamed to own it; but it was—just—you see—that—I do not—and that is the whole truth—I do not."

Cousin Jacob, when he was listening to anything in particular, had a habit of pausing in his walk, folding his arms, and pitching himself forward on his toes, and backwards on his heels, performing a see-saw movement, which always excited Edward's risibility; and when he glanced

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at him while speaking, he could hardly refrain laughing. The old gentleman's quick eye caught the expression in a moment, and he said, "Laugh, my boy! It *is* very absurd to see an old man playing a sort of shuttlecock with himself. If I had been rallied out of this trick when a boy, it would have been the better for me. Now for your '*And, and*'"——

"Only that I do not like to be laughed at, Cousin Jacob, that's all," exclaimed poor Edward with a great effort. "I can endure anything better—I know I can—anything better than being turned into ridicule; and apt as *you* are to laugh at me, I do not think you would do it if you knew the pain it gives me; the intense pain," he added, while tears gathered around his eyes, and trembled on their lids. "I dare not own this to the fellows at school—I mean to say my schoolfellows. I always brazen it out, and say I don't mind a bit; but I do. If you are so good as to tell me my faults without laughing at them, I will endeavour to correct them, and I hope succeed. Do not laugh at me, Cousin Jacob," continued the boy so piteously, that the old man would not have laughed at him for the world.

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"Well, Edward," he said, "I confess it is better, more manly and wise, to endeavour to reason you out of your faults; but seeing how little reason had hitherto done for you, I was inclined to try the other course; and I will only make this bargain with you, 'If *I* do not laugh at you, *you* must not laugh at others?'"

Edward's face grew bright, and his eyes sparkled, and a beaming smile played over his features, and he really looked grateful and happy.

"I will watch myself, and never give way to a habit which has caused me so much pain. I never do turn people into ridicule that I do not feel something like a '*twitch*' near or at my heart—something that gives me a pull; and it is very odd, if I persevere, I am never comfortable after that."

"Ah, ah!—good sign—very good sign!" muttered Cousin Jacob. "Those Whisperers are capital fellows—more common in some families than in others. Whoever they take to is pretty certain to do well in the end."

Edward was so delighted at his cousin's promise, that his full, frank, boy's heart poured forth much that could not be very interesting to

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his aged companion: at least so anybody else would have thought; but to Cousin Jacob, who, shrivelled and withered up as he looked, had still a genial heart and a remembrance of his own boyish days, and, moreover, a remembrance of the childhood of his own children, and could recall how they grew up, some with more faults than others, but all with frank, open natures—there was something soothing and refreshing in the companionship of the ardent, high-spirited youth, which made him enjoy a walk through the woods more than he had done for a very long time; and Edward listened, with the devoted attention of one who is eager to obtain information, to all the old man told of the far-distant countries where some of his youthful years had been spent. He told him of the wide savannas, and wild horses, and shaggy buffaloes of the American prairies, and promised to lend him some books where these were well described: and he told him of the beauties and glories of old Rome, and made him bring his classical knowledge to illustrate the present by a reference to the past. And when they discovered the opening to the humble bees' dwelling in the bank, and noted how the creatures buzzed up to it, and then

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entered in a sober and sagacious manner, their pouches stored with honey, and their legs laden with the farina of the flowers, heavy, hard-working fellows, sounding their wings against the resisting air, as they boomed along, and then, after sundry dustings and shakings, advancing into their castle, Edward was proud enough of quoting from the Georgics of Virgil; and, if truth must be told, it gladdened the elderly heart of Cousin Jacob to hear the favourite poem of his own early days repeated in the boy's young musical voice; and he took up the theme, and they continued quoting Latin together in a most surprising manner: and then they conversed about natural history, and Edward was delighted at the interest his friend took in birds and animals—and the migration of birds, their comings and goings, and their probable conversations on the house-tops and tree-tops, seemed an inexhaustible subject of conversation to the old and young cousins; and at last, fatigued with heat and exercise, they sat down on a bank, and Edward, fearing the grass was damp, ran into a neighbouring stackyard, and was just going to carry his arms full of straw to lay upon the grass,

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so as to form a dry seat for Cousin Jacob, when it occurred to him he had no right to take the straw without the farmer's leave. This did not suggest itself until his arms were filled.

"There is no one to ask," said Edward.

"Seek some one," came to the boy's ear as clearly as if it had been spoken.

Edward let the straw fall, and looked all around him. The smoke curled in a soft, gray vapour from the distant farm-house, seen as it was through a broken vista of hay and corn-stacks, and huge piles of firewood, and queer sheds, supported by stone pillars and old brown crossed beams, and Edward thought what a pretty picture it would make. There was a shallow pond, large enough to be called a lake out of a lake-country, and it was the most animated part of the scene.

A pair of very steady geese—goose and gander—who considered the pond in every respect their property, to have and to hold for themselves and their progeny, were sailing stiffly and statelily (for geese) in the midst of an almost countless generation of half-grown-up geese, and soft, yellow, puffy goslings—the gander moving about them with a protecting air, and hissing

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every now and then, as he elongated his neck; not that there was anything to hiss at, but he seemed to think it desirable to show his authority and fatherly patronage; while his grandmother-wife followed in his wake, content with giving an affectionate poke on to a weak gosling, or gee-geeing, in rather a hoarse voice, to her numerous descendants. In a little far-away nook, a sort of bay in the pond, a full-feathered, rustling hen was exerting all her eloquence to persuade her undutiful ducklings to leave the water. The poor thing paced backwards and forwards along the margin of the pond, now wetting the tips of her toes, then drawing hastily back in terror of the element, which she believed would swallow up her offspring, after all her patient hatching and impatient remonstrances. The barn-roofs were dotted with pigeons; and anxious as Edward was about the straw, his quick eye dwelt for a moment upon a superb *black horseman*, who far surpassed the rest as he spread out his feathers and arched his neck in the sun. The longer he gazed, the more distinct and interesting would the denizens of that extensive farmyard have become. The very lady-pig, and her rustling, bustling piglings,

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and their twisted tails, seemed placed in the most picturesque, because most natural and unstudied, attitudes.

"Aunt Tart told me I was to take care Cousin Jacob did not catch cold, he was so subject to spasms," thought Edward as he stooped towards the shining straw. He hardly knew why, but he again withdrew, and turned round the stackyard corner to go towards the farm, resolved to find "some one." As he did so, who should stand before him but a burly farmer, stout and thick-set, poising a thorn-stick in his bony hand; but Edward did not feel afraid of him or his stick, but walked up, and looking him straight in the face with honest eyes, he said—

"If you please, sir, I wanted a little straw to put under yonder old gentleman, who will sit on the damp grass; and if he catches cold, he will be very ill, and my aunt very angry. I was going to take the straw, as I could not see any of whom to ask it; and I must say," added Edward, growing suddenly scarlet, as if he had just read the expression of the man's face aright, "that it would have been better for you to have come forward at once, than to have

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stood watching there, as if I was going to steal it!"

"And will thee tell 'un, young highflyer, if thee takes what isn't thine, without leave or liberty of the owner of her, what d'ye please to call 'un?"

This strange English was, however, perfectly intelligible to the Eton boy; and waiving the argument, he simply said—

"Will you give me a little straw for the purpose I told you?"

"Thot I will, and a blessin' with 'un; but I watched thee, for I thought I should ha' cotched thee. I saw thee take it up, and I said, Gi'e it him, Martin—(Martin is me—Joe Martin; that's myself, you understand, of Huckleback Farm, Grimshackle; that's where you be at this present)—gi'e it him well, for there's no end to the lads who come here, taking first one thing, then another, imposing upon my nature: they all know me. So I thought I'd joost watch like, an' if thee'd a took 'un, wouldn't I ha' banged at 'ee, that's all!" And after shaking his stick with a good-humoured laugh at the lad, he filled his arms with the straw. "Now, that's done, and thee's welcome; but hark'ee, young master,

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did 'ee never hear of a chap called the *Whisperer?*"

"Yes, that I have," answered Edward. "Do you know him?"

"Know *him!* I've known many in my time, and precious friends they be, the whole tribe on 'em. Oh, it's a fine sign when they coom of themselves, and mayhap when you don't want them—thoomp! thoomp! harder and harder will they knock—the harder the better. It's wonderful, too, the pains mine always took about small things! Bless 'ee, he'd make as much *foos* about what we coontry lads call a '*white lie*,' as many would make aboot a *black one*, and kick up as sore work aboot a neighbour's apple that was not my own, as if it was a bank-note; and I can't but say he was in the right on't—that he was! For if you look at the beginning of onything, see how small it is. Why, grandfeyther minds when that oak was an acorn: there was a small beginning! But look'ee at this, young gentleman, and think on it: *if there had been any decay in the acorn, there would have been no oak;* so the Whisperer was right when he thoomped me for a bad beginning. People say, *pardon* the first

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fault; but I say, PUNISH the first fault, and you'll have no second—that's what I say! I say there should be no pardon or parley with punishment for a first fault. There, run, my little man, and ask your friend what he thinks of the Whisperer. Thee's a good lad not to have took even the straw without leave; I'd have *thoomped* thee all the more for being a gentleman, because thee ought to know better. Some think that with a fine coat on their back they may do what they please in a farmyard; but the farmer's yard be as much his own as the gentleman's hall be his; and the best way, you see, to have our own property respected, be that property a bat, a ball, or a building, is to respect the property of others. Good-day to you."

Edward felt sorely perplexed by the farmer and his eloquence, and its diversity amused him not a little. "How he jumped," thought Edward, as he himself jumped over the little stream which fed the great farm-pond, and prevented its being stagnant water — "how he jumped from the Whisperer into an oak-tree, and from the oak-tree back into Huckleback Farm, then cut at my gentility, then said some-

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thing quite new about first faults, and I do think he was right there—it's so natural to a fellow, if he's let off easy *once*, to try it on again."

Edward succeeded in obliging Cousin Jacob to permit the straw to be spread, or "lumped" rather, into a seat; and it was a well-chosen spot to rest in after a woodland ramble. The farm was to the left, on the opposite side of the road; but the elm-tree beneath whose shadow they reposed was knotted, and gnarled, and hollowed, affording food and shelter to thousands of seen and unseen creatures—from the long-backed earwig, whose eloquent forceps cry "beware" to many wandering fingers, to the wondrous atoms whose universe is no larger than the triune leaf of the wood-sorrel, or the blade of grass which bows to every passing zephyr.

"I was thinking," said Cousin Jacob, "even while watching the outposts of that ant-hill, I was thinking how wise your aunt was in bringing your sisters to finish their education at a little distance from the metropolis, instead of taking them into its very heart, where their minds would become distracted by a variety of

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objects before their bad habits were overcome; and then how good for you, after your bustling school, to come to the quiet, the enjoyment, the pure air, and happiness of such scenes as these! By and by, there will be time enough for the play, the Opera, the drive, and all the active and yet enervating amusements of fashionable life! Make yourself strong against the wear and tear of London life, which I heard you tell your sister you should rush into some day," added Cousin Jacob bitterly. "You often put me in mind of one dear boy whom I lost in its vortex, and I gave him the same advice I shall give you when the time comes; but he perished—he perished for all that—broken in health, in mind, in character, in all!"

"But surely," said Edward, who, to confess the truth, would much rather have spent his holidays in London, "he need not have done that: all the pleasures of life may be enjoyed in moderation."

"True—true! spoken like a Solon, Ned—like a very Solon!" replied Cousin Jacob, looking up cheerfully again. "But that very *moderation* is the one thing as difficult to find

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as to keep! It is indeed a treasure past all price. The jewel of life, if set in *moderation*, will retain its beauty and its utility double the time it usually does: it is alike the guardian of youth and age, the vanguard of worldly wisdom, the safeguard of worldly pleasure. It prevents us from going too fast, and insures health, and cheerfulness, and length of days. Moderation is man's best counsellor."

"I thought the Whisperer," put in Edward slyly—"I thought the Whisperer was man's best counsellor?"

"I never knew a Whisperer who did not go hand-in-hand with Moderation," answered Cousin Jacob; "ay, you may look as cunning as you please, but the Whisperer has saved thousands from destruction, and"——

I am not certain but Cousin Jacob might have continued, and even introduced Edward to the Whisperer, then and there, were it not that suddenly their attention was attracted by a hawk rising in pursuit of a lark, which a few moments before had been filling the little dell, which was overhung by the old elm, with the purest melody. The lark soared higher and higher, the hawk endeavouring, with strong

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and rapid wing, to get above it. The contest was fearfully unequal.

"If I had but a gun," exclaimed Edward, "I would soon bring the villain down!"

"What a world it is!" moralised Cousin Jacob. "When the bird's heart was fullest of joy, and its little home in sight—— But my eyes are dazzled. Has he got above her yet?" he inquired.

Bang went a gun from the other side of that hide-away old elm, and almost at the same moment Edward tossed his cap in the air, and gave such a shout; while the hawk—struck ere he could strike—struggled and tumbled over and over, until he lay a crumpled, mangled heap of feathered mischief, not ten yards from where they had observed the lark to rise and sing.

"Thee'll have no more *larks* over my corn, I promise thee, thou wicked old chicken-hoister," exclaimed Ned's farmer-friend. "I do loove to get a good shot at thee, when thou thinkest nought but of thy prey, thou hedge-row thief—thou cowardly butcher—thou pitiful sneak! If thee'd fight fair, and thy fellow, I'd maybe let thee bide; but a father-bird above his nest—

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a wee larkie!—with little wit and less strength. I'm glad I hit so fair, old hunt-the-hedge! I do so hate them hawks; they're just like attorneys, or hornets, or adders. I'm right glad I shot 'un; and I'm glad the bird lives to bring up its young family: 'Callow brood,' as the hymn calls 'un."

"You're a good shot, sir," said Cousin Jacob, as much amused as Edward at the farmer's shrewd plainness.

"Ees, sir, I be, thank'ee, a prime shot; and a first-rate hand at cricket. It would be mock-modesty not to own it. Every man knows if he's got'n a straight eye, and a strong pair of arms and hands—blessings both, and not to be denied! They're gifts from the Almighty, not depending upon tailors, or shoemakers, or hatters! They're Mother Nature's keepsakes, not to be despised! I doan't go for to say them hands would look *neat* under a ruffle, such as I see in a lord's picture once. You may laugh at that, young measter. Poor, hard-working honest labourers," he added, holding up his enormous hands—and furrowed, and chopped, and crossed enough to puzzle all the fortune-telling gipsies in the land—but nevertheless he eyed them

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with a laughable affection and tenderness—"it's wonderful what a deal they've got through in their time," he said, spreading out each finger, and turning them over, without heeding the laughing eyes of Edward, or the half-amused, half-reproving glances cast upon him from the little twinkling orbs of Cousin Jacob. "It's joost wonderful what they've done, them two hands, and it's more than curio's. It's a foine lesson to think what hard-working honest bones can get through, if they'll only try. Ah, lad—lad!" he continued, addressing the young gentleman, "I began loife, me and my missus, hedgers and ditchers, 'huers of wood and drawers of water'—mere bondsmen, I may say—and then hay-making, weeding, turniping, anything; for you see we loved each other truly, and shared labour together, and never felt it a hardship either, for we were both bouncing strong. We had no children, and we went a-field together, and returned home together—she having the hardest of it—for when a man's day's work is done, whoy, it *is* done, and he looks to rest; but the poor woman, after what's called the day's work is done, must provide for the morrow—that's how I look on't; and she'd

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never sit down for two good hours after six, and find some contrivance all the time to keep me quiet, saying, 'Woman's work was no' man's work!'"

"You used to read, I suppose?" said Edward.

"Nae, nae; we had nae education: that's come since. And when I see the new spirit that's come wie'it—the landlords and masters taking to their tenants and labourers, and looking to their comforts, and educating their children, and trying to draw them oop, oop, in all usefulness—I feel it all right, and cause of thankfulness. Though still, I say—Steady! hauld firm and steady both! The farmer mustn't *expeck* that his *head*, if it be as toight packt as an egg, can work without *hands*. Heads is *oop* these times, but hands must still be *doing*, and not down. It would be a droll world if the hands struck, and refused to do heads' bidding. But to go back to reading:—I knew my letters, and could read Smith, Brown, and Robinson, in the old-fashioned spelling-book, and the 'Sermon on the Mount,' and much beside in Testament. But my missus always would have it that I had 'em by heart, and would puzzle me

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on the print. She gave me a new place to read, while I kept on at the old thing: and still the old thing was so good, that we found new satisfaction in it every day. But we got on somehow. Well, sirs, as I say, we got on, and got on; and a queer but koind little gentleman in Suffolk let me a little house and a bit of land, and proud I was to work my own stocking into it; and somehow every ear of corn had an especial blessing, and brought forth tenfold above others' wheat or barley. The memory o' those days makes me love the larks, for they used to call us *oop* regular on summers' mornings; and many a time, seeing how *they* mounted to the heavens, carried my thoughts along wi' 'un. It's wonderful how the song of a bird, sirs, can stir the heart. Ah, that was a *frecksome* little gentleman who let us our first land! 'You'll be a rich farmer yet,' he'd say; 'that you will!' But he went away, and I left the county, and came here—he saved me, too, once by a bit of advice, he did; and I should like him to know the good that did me. But it's no matter to him, though the help and advice was everything to me at that time, standing as I did in the way of sore temptation. And it was

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a simple thing, and in every one's power, if they'd only moind it."

"Ay, ay," said Cousin Jacob, and his usually rigid and severe features relaxed, and a smile so bright and natural illumined his features—"ay, ay," he repeated, "he told you—*to listen to the Whisperer.*"

"He joost did!" replied the burly farmer, turning with the rapidity of a greyhound. "He joost did, sir! But how did thee know that?"

"Don't you know *me?*" inquired Cousin Jacob.

"I see autumn and spring so often, that I forget faces," replied the farmer after an anxious gaze; "and yet I *ought* to know thee too."

"I am more changed than you are, Joe Martin, certainly, but I think you *might* remember."

"Whoy, be it possible?—Mr Jacob, sir!" And his eyes glittered; his face seemed to enlarge. With one hand he lifted off his hat, while half-shyly he extended the other to Cousin Jacob, who took as much of it as his could contain with evident pleasure.

The farmer and the gentleman were both agitated. The former had become a rich and

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happy man in his estate; the latter, though more wealthy than he had ever desired to be, had lost nearly all he loved best in the world by death. And had it not been for the ready sympathy he still felt with the young, his anxiety for their welldoing, and his desire to assist those who needed, Cousin Jacob must have been very unhappy; but no one, believe me, my young friends, is ever permanently unhappy who opens his heart to the necessities of his fellow-creatures. It is only the cold and the sulky who continue to be miserable when God gives the power of usefulness, which is the seed of all happiness. Trust me that I tell you truly when I tell you, as I have often done before, that to be useful in our sphere, and according to our means, is to be in the high road to happiness. Cousin Jacob was not useful in an ordinary, straightforward fashion: he was odd, and peculiar, and, as you well know already, not particularly winning or soft in his manner: he was apt to forget that the same Scripture which tells us to be "pitiful," tells us also to be "courteous;" but his heart was full of real kindness; and he thrilled with positive pleasure when the farmer had, unconscious of

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his presence, acknowledged the kindness he had shown him nearly thirty years before. We must not anticipate gratitude, but meet it with a cordial greeting when it comes.

"And be this lad one of thy sons, Mr Jacob? Laws me, how I forget time!—grandsons, I suppose? No! And the young mistress—but maybe she's gray-haired now? What!—gone? She was such a pretty bride! We used to say, though thee was a little gentleman, thee had the fairest lady in the land to wife. I ask your pardon, sir," he said, seeing that all traces of pleasure had faded from Cousin Jacob's face; "I'm all wrong—I could not mean to give thee pain—I see thot. I'll forget the past: but noa, I can't: I owe everything I have in the world to thy goodness and thy counsel, and I'm so happy, I must have a shout an' I die for it!" And so saying, to relieve his emotion with some strong and unusual effort, he tossed his hat in the air, and gave so loud an "huzza!" adding, "One cheer more!" that his own farm-dogs answered by a volley of "barks;" and the farm donkeys brayed; the geese cackled; the cocks crowed; the turkey-cock raised his great fan-tail and gobbled; the guinea-fowl flew on the ricks

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and screamed, as if they expected a hail-storm; the sheep on the hill-side left their "bite," and looked sillily about, as such creatures always do when astonished by a new noise; and presently a remarkably clean cap was seen bobbing along the inside of the garden-railing. The farmer caught sight of the cap, and after exclaiming, "There she is!" put his hand to his cheek, as huntsmen do when they want those far off to hear them, and roared, "Come on, Cicely; thee little knows what's afore thee!"

"I shouldn't wonder, Mr Jacob," added the farmer, "if thee know'd me by my *scholarship:* thee used to say I was the best man on the land, and spoke the worst English!" Cousin Jacob and Edward laughed at this. The farmer's bad English had disposed the youth to treat him with contempt; but it was impossible for this disposition to continue; his honest frankness, his overflowing gratitude towards Cousin Jacob, his strong natural good sense, his uprightness of purpose—all commanded respect. His wife was as overjoyed as her husband had been to see the friend of their early days. The young do not know how rapidly time flies, nor can they tell how his noiseless feet trample and decay whatever they

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rest upon. Dame Cicely did not perceive the change in her husband, because it had come gradually; but it struck her so forcibly in Cousin Jacob, that, as they all walked towards the farmhouse, which, to confess the truth, Cousin Jacob was as anxious to see as the farmer to show, she kept stealing sly glances at him, and muttering to herself, "Dear-lack-a-daisy-me-now! why, he *used* to be such a very dapper little gentleman, with such an upright carriage, that he looked a very king—dear, kind heart! Well, how some people do change! But there's my Joe! he's *no changed.* The white hair is more comely than the red; and the parson says to me, 'Ah, there's no need for Joe to powder!' It is mighty queer—but a blessing—how my husband keeps so young!"

There was much to be seen at the farm, and the grateful-hearted creatures were so delighted to trace all their good fortune back to "Mr Jacob," who was obliged to taste cream and cheese, "humming ale," and honey, and elderberry and gooseberry wine, and unnamed cakes, and promise to accept some eggs and a "roasting pig;" and go to the byre to see the cows; and to stables worthy of a palace, to see

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the fine, fat, dappled plough-horses; and hear all about the lambs, and sleeky, sleepy calves; the multitudes of chickens and ducks; and be introduced to the farmer's grandchildren.

"But," suggested Edward, "I thought you had no children?"

"Nor had we, young sir," replied the woman; "*but other people had;* and we have placed many an orphan out in the world that never knew the want of either father or mother, since God sent them to us, or us to them; and they have had *great crops* of children, who make mirth and sunshine in the farm, and call us 'Granddad' and 'Grandmam!'"

"Never took to one of them," put in the farmer, "but by the advice of the Whisperer. Long ago he used to counsel me against my own wishes, and we had brave tussels together; but now we jog on together, all harmony." The farmer showed his ricks, and barns, and thrashing-machines, and told of *his* mill, and his acres of oats, and wheat, barley, and mangel-wurzel, and meadows of the finest hay, and would fain have marched them over the ground all in his own hands; and it was pleasant to see the good understanding which existed between the farmer

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and his farm-servants. The very horses poked their noses at Dame Cicely's pocket-hole for apples. And then the beautiful farm-garden! never were roses and honeysuckle so rampant and abundant in blossom and perfume; never were there such bushes of lavender and sweet hyssop, and rosemary, with rue planted as a moral beside it; never such forests of raspberries, and such apple-trees! Such piles of beehives, and beds of mignionette, hedged in with flaunting sweetwilliams and close carnations, sheltered by solemn-looking hedgerows of holly and clipt yew.

And when poor Cousin Jacob thought there could be nothing more to see, and felt really overpowered by the good people's gratitude, and the multitude of long-buried thoughts and feelings which they all unintentionally conjured up around him, the one whispered the other, and the wife said, "Do;" and the husband replied, "It's your foolishness, Cicely;" and she urged the more strongly, and at last had her way; and so led to a garden-shed, the door of which she unlocked, and they found themselves in the midst of all kinds of implements of husbandry; and Edward began to be aware that

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though their host spoke a provincial lingo—which at first made him laugh, but afterwards caused him to think *that perhaps it was not more incomprehensible or reprehensible than the vulgar stable-slang which he had indulged in from pure affectation*—the farmer had acquired *real* and *substantial knowledge* of the art whose origin could be traced to the Garden of Eden, and which inspired some of our oldest and finest poets.

He described the uses of various tools of husbandry, and the improvement made in modern times, so as to lessen labour and increase profit; and though he did not pronounce the words, as he said himself, "quite dictionary," he showed that he understood the chemical workings of the substances which enrich the earth, and how to make the best use of them.

"Now!" said Dame Cicely.

"Ay do," answered the farmer; "thou'lt not be happy else."

Then Dame Cicely, with great formality, unlocked a closet, which her visitors had not previously perceived, and Edward looked anxiously into it, expecting to see the most wonderful wonder of all wonders; but he drew back some-

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what disappointed, and turned to the dame for explanation. The cupboard contained two old worn-out hoes, and two old dibbles, and a pair of old hedging-gloves and reaping-hooks, an old scythe and whetstone, two old hayforks, and sundry worn-out choppers.

"These are *her* fancy," said the farmer; "these were our first tools—our first steps in *loife*, I may call 'un. When we married, these few bits of old iron were our stock in trade; them, and the WILLINGNESS TO USE THEM! We went a-field with them together, until we got a sort of liking for the made-up things; and when it pleased GOD to prosper us, we thought we'd lay 'um by, as a reminder of what we had been, and what we had done; for there is a great difference between a day-labourer and a farmer—more, loike, than between a poor commoner and a great lord."

"And I'll not deny," added Dame Cicely, "that them tools have been good friends to me, perhaps better in my prosperity than in my adversity!"

"We never had 'adversity,' wife. Adversity, I take it, is a knock-'em-down thing, that comes when people that have been *oop* are down. 'In

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our poverty,' you might say: and yet we never were poor!—we had enough to eat, to drink (thanks to the bright water that dances from the earth), to wear, and a little to give—that ain't poverty?"

"Then what am I to call it?" inquired the goodwife.

"Joost what thee likes," replied the farmer, who had puzzled himself.

"I only mean to say," continued Dame Cicely, "that in our prosperity, when I've felt offended that the 'squire's lady carried her head too high towards me, or I wanted too gay a silk-gown, or was inclined to look down on any struggling body that came in my way, and turn my nose a little too high because of their poverty"——

"You're never inclined to do that, Cicely!" said her husband kindly.

"Nay, but I am. I often feel pride working within me," she replied—"too often; and then I come and turn over the tools; and every one is like an open book, and reads me a lesson against pride: for why may not those who use the same as that dibble or reaping-hook now be as we are this day; and better, because they will have education?"

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"Well," said Cousin Jacob, "we may read things with a difference. I think, if I had grown rich after your fashion, those tools would make me proud."

"We have nothing to be proud of, so to say, in this world," said Cicely as she replaced the tools, and wrapped the old trowel up in a piece of flannel, as if, as Edward said, "it was a baby;" "but a great deal to thank God for."

"You do right, madam," observed Cousin Jacob; "you do very right to preserve those memorials of industry and exertion. They are pleasant to look upon, as evidences of God's goodness: pleasant, as proofs of what can be accomplished without education or money by sheer, honest, English labour: pleasant, for they tell (and here Cousin Jacob's voice faltered) of the number of years God has spared you together: pleasant, as keeping down PRIDE, when it rises too highly in your heart: pleasant and right, in teaching you to RESPECT YOURSELVES; for *these* are evidences of what you *were*, and all around bear evidence of what you ARE!"

"I call that as good as a sarmin," said the farmer; "and that bill-hook, too, is pleasant, sir, for it reminds me of a great breach I had once

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with the Whisperer. Ay, young measter, it's as true as my head is a fixture, and I'll tell it some day."

At this moment a half dog-cart half taxed-cart was driven up to the door by a rough-and-ready-looking lad, whose odd mixture of finery and indications of labour were strangely mingled together—a black beaver "Sunday hat" ill according with a smock-frock. The horse quickly attracted Edward's attention. It was a bright bay, with black legs and tail: its legs were straight and firm; its shoulder large; its head and ears small; its nostrils full, but rather too movable; and its eyes—they were full of fire and expression—quite a treat to look at! Edward was delighted. The farmer, with many apologies, hoped the gentlemen would not be offended; but he thought Mr Jacob would "do him the honour" to go in his "shay," just as a kindness to him; and as it was "coming on to rain," he thought he wouldn't mind it. "The horse was like the wind, and gentle too;" and the end was, that Cousin Jacob and Edward allowed themselves to be driven homeward by the farmer's boy.

Edward praised the horse—who could help it?—but he hinted to Cousin Jacob that "the turn-

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out" was not quite the thing. Cousin Jacob gave a sort of grunt in reply.

"It's a noble animal!" repeated Edward; "but the turn-out is so queer!"

"I am sorry you are uncomfortable," said Cousin Jacob.

"I never was more comfortable, cousin."

"Then perhaps you are afraid of the horse?" suggested the old gentleman.

"Me—afraid of a horse!" exclaimed Edward, growing very red; and then, to show he was not afraid, he attempted to snatch the reins out of the driver's hand. The youth would not yield.

"Just give me *the ribbons* for five minutes," pleaded young master.

"I never got no ribbons since last election," replied the boy, "when we all mounted true blue. My! but that was a gay time! You should ha' seen our shay then! and knots as big as your head over the horse's winkers. My! measter never spared the ribbons! But I ha' none now; my little sister Anne got the last for her babbies."

"Let me drive."

"Na, na—that's contrary to rules. Whoever

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drives out drives whoam, and no *swops;* and, Lord love you, young sir, you could no more hold this beast nor—nothing! He'd know the difference in a minute between your driving and mine. I see by the way you flicks the flys—so playful—that Black Jock would sneeze at you, or run you on a bank in no time."

"Run *me* on a bank!" repeated Edward indignantly; "I should like to see the horse that *could* do that!"

"I'd rather not," observed Cousin Jacob.

"Why, the Windsor coachman often gives me his ribbons—I mean reins," persisted Edward in a triumphant tone.

"When the horses are changing, I suppose?" replied the old gentleman. "Even that is not very prudent. I knew a lady who upset a pony phaeton when the ponies were standing stone-still."

This sarcasm had not the desired effect. Edward grasped the reins from the astonished boy, and exclaiming, "Run me on a bank!" shook them gaily.

The farmer's servant stuck bravely to his duty. He tried to get the reins again into his keeping, but the horse had broken into a

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gallop. The two youths endeavoured to restrain him, but in vain. The farm-boy became very red, Edward very pale, while Cousin Jacob held fast with both hands. "Guide him!" shouted the old gentleman. "All you can do now is to guide him!"

The horse had what is called a "good mouth"—that is to say, he felt every touch, every movement of the finger, and consequently was the more disposed to resent the furious tugs which the really terrified Edward gave the reins. The affair was now becoming serious. Cousin Jacob and Edward were so greatly interested in the farmer and the farm, that they had not heeded the gathering storm, which the farmer had endeavoured to provide against by sending them, as he intended, swiftly home: this good intention, like many other good intentions in the world, was frustrated by the self-conceit and impetuosity of a self-willed boy. There was one very dangerous pass in the road—a shelving bank on one side, and a rugged declivity on the other terminating in a chalk-pit. If the horse swerved to either side, the upsetting of the trio seemed inevitable. A railing, placed for the protection of travellers, had been shattered the

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previous day by a huge cart-wheel; and though a carpenter had been employed to mend it, the work was only half-done, and about thirty feet of the perilous path remained without any protection. The clouds gathered in dark masses, huge drops of rain struck upon their hats at lessening intervals, and more than one flash of lightning had zig-zagged through the air. The heavy-looking farmer's boy stood up and intreated Edward to give the reins to him; but terror or obstinacy—perhaps both—had effectually bewildered the young gentleman, and he tore away at the unfortunate horse's head, causing him to swerve like a pendulum, now one way, then another, while he rushed wildly forward. If Cousin Jacob had been younger or stronger he would have acted—he would have done something to avert destruction; but his body had been over-fatigued by exercise, and his mind unnerved by seeing the farmer, who recalled so vividly those whom he had loved and lost since their last, long-ago meeting; moreover, he was sitting behind the two boys, and thus the great peril of the pass was concealed from his observation: the rain, too, which during the previous minute poured furiously down—as a little child

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I know and love once said, "to wash away the lightning"—was blown in Cousin Jacob's face the moment he attempted to look on one side or the other. When Edward saw the fearful gulf, made still more terrible by the rush of the storm, which appeared to make it a sort of sporting-ground, to dash its torrents and its lightnings into, instead of giving the horse its head, and guiding it with a light firm hand, he endeavoured to rein it up, which threw it on its haunches, and then it plunged desperately forward. The heavy, loutish-looking boy, whom, to say the truth, Edward did not like to sit beside, now proved that he was worthy of the trust his master reposed in him.

Seizing the reins firmly with one hand, with the other he dealt Edward so decided a blow, that he fell at his feet, stunned only for a minute; but that minute enabled him to seize the reins he had intreated for in vain, and steer the horse safely beyond danger. Cousin Jacob saw the blow and its object, and exerted himself, while Edward was recovering from its effects, to keep him down. It was quite wonderful to see how soon the noble horse felt that he was under safe guidance, and a control to which it was no

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disgrace to yield, and submitted to it without another wilful movement. All along the lad had spoken to him in the tone of friendly sympathy which those generous animals so well understand; but the hand and the voice had not acted together, and the horse was consequently bewildered: now all was right again, and he flew through the storm as if he was the Storm King, and defied the power of his rebellious subjects.

When his freight arrived at their homes, the farmer's boy touched his dripping hat respectfully, and said, "I ask yer pardon, young measter, but the old gentleman saw I couldn't help it. The horse is worth a good seventy pound to measter, and the cart and harness quite new."

"He thought more of the cart and horse than of our lives!" grumbled Edward.

"And yet he saved them," said Cousin Jacob in a severe tone.

"'Twas only a tap, young gentleman, and I hope you bear no malice: I did it gentle, I did indeed, *'cause I saw you were soft-like!*"

"Soft-like!"—a high-spirited Eton boy, who had talked slang until he had fancied himself

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almost as perfect in the language as an ostler —who made himself most heroically sick with cigars, because he would smoke like the "rest of them"—who more than once had glued an "imperial" on his soft, white chin, and plied an oar right sturdily (in his own opinion) on the Thames!—who maintained that boxing was more graceful than fencing, and imagined he "drew on the gloves" with considerable effect—to be told by a loutish boy that "he was soft-like!" Edward had been improving—had improved very much—but despite the most useful and interesting scene at the farmer's, the temptation of driving and showing off had caused a fearful relapse, that might have terminated fatally but for the last argument of the farmer's boy, which, be it remembered, he had not recourse to until every other failed.

"When my young friend becomes more himself," said Cousin Jacob, addressing the young farmer, "I am sure he will fully appreciate, as I do, the service you rendered us this day. Your name is"——

"Giles—Giles Ashby, sir."

"Then here is a present for you, Giles Ashby. You may spend the money; but keep the purse,

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as it will serve to remind you how bravely you performed your duty to your master, and to those who were intrusted to your care, and, I hope, encourage you to persevere in the same course. I will see the farmer in a day or two. Good-morning."

"Good-afternoon; and thank you, sir. I'm so proud you were not angry!"

"I hope you are not angry, Edward?" whispered Cousin Jacob.

"I could have managed the horse, I am sure —that is, I think," muttered the young gentleman; and yet he drew out his purse and offered it, certainly with an ungracious air, to the farmer's boy.

"No, no: I thank'ee all the same, young measter; but I don't want it, as there's been a *tap* between us. I'd rather shake hands; and I'm sure I beg your pardon. I can't say I didn't mean it, because I did; but there was no bad blood in it." Edward's brow cleared, and he held out his hand: it was grasped as if in a vice. "Thank'ee, thank'ee, sir; now I'm happy! I can't bear to sleep, and think any one wants to have it out with me. It's rather a particular beast to drive; but when he knows you, you

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might drive him," said the farmer's boy, "with a cobweb!"

As if to confirm this testimony, and in affirmation of the friendship existing between them, the horse turned round, scraped his fore-foot on the ground, and holding down his head, "whinnied" in that tone of intelligence and affection which horse-lovers so well understand. The lad put his arm caressingly on the creature's shoulder, and it immediately turned round and licked his cheek.

"Thee's very wilful sometimes, Black Jock; but thee's sorry for it, and so am I; but that's enough about it now." And after much bobbing and smiling in his own peculiar way, the farmer's boy turned Black Jock round and took his leave.

"That fellow," said Cousin Jacob, "has the presence of mind, the firmness, and the courage, of a true-born Englishman."

"And the fist of one!" added Edward.

"Ay, but he did not use it till the last extremity," said Cousin Jacob; "and then how ably he performed!—touched you just in the right place to bring you safely down at his feet." Cousin Jacob looked at Edward, and then gave

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way to a hearty, sincere burst of merriment: not one of his usual dry, sarcastic laughs, but a right earnest one. "I shall never think of you without remembering how *rueful* you looked, and how amazed at your tumble, and how awkwardly you got out of the straw! I pitied you, though you deserved it; you made such a face, and rubbed your cheek like a baby. But I beg your pardon," added the old gentleman, who had been surprised into this fit of merriment—"I beg your pardon; I think I can promise you never to laugh so again, for I do not imagine I shall ever again have such cause." And then Cousin Jacob bethought him of the great danger they had escaped; and he said he never would lose sight of the farmer's brave boy, for that they owed him their lives. Edward intreated him not to tell Aunt Tart or his sisters; for if his sisters heard the story, they would not forget it. He confessed he had been perverse beyond bearing; and altogether, his sullenness yielded to his good sense and good feeling, and it rejoiced his old friend to observe the change; he did not intend to wound him, particularly as he had formerly so frankly confessed that he did not like to be laughed at.

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Aunt Tart, as time passed on, became less nervous and less anxious. She saw that it was necessary to be very patient with little people; for however they may desire to improve, the very best of them are trials to those who love them best and dearest. She was not foolishly jealous of the ascendancy Cousin Jacob acquired over them at once; on the contrary, she encouraged it. And though his *hints* were frequently *hits*, still the young folk loved him and feared him, and were now always ready to laugh, even at themselves, if Cousin Jacob began the laugh. They had almost forgotten the mystery of the "Whisperer," for they had been greatly taken up with, and interested in, the farmer and his farmyard, until something occurred which made their cousin inquire with a very wise shake of his head—"Where was the Whisperer?"

"Now do tell us all about the Whisperer?" exclaimed the sisters. "I am sure we deserve it, cousin; we work so hard—we are so tidy—we put by our books—wipe our pens—arrange our drawers—give the servants as little trouble as possible."

"My frock is never off my shoulder now," said one

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"And *I* never whisper or mutter in company," exclaimed the other.

"Now, Edward, do help us to prevail on Cousin Jacob to explain all about the Whisperer."

Edward looked at his cousin and laughed.

"Now that is not fair," said the youngest. "I *do* think he knows all about it."

"Well, and if I do?" answered the boy. "Cousin Jacob kept my secret, and I keep his —that is only fair." His sisters began to coax him: one promised him a purse, the other a chain, if he would tell; but Edward became absolutely heroic, and refused. "No, he would not; he would not even whisper of the Whisperer. He knew his weakness: he was *apt* to talk—very apt; and whenever he did, he got himself and others into scrapes, so he would do so no more. No, even if Aunt Tart asked him, he would not tell: he was resolved not to, and so that was enough!" And without any more words to prove his resolve, and that he really was in earnest, Edward put an ancient map under one arm, and a history of Greece under the other, and taking his night-candle, strode manfully off to a tiny room, which looked like

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the fragment of a chamber, that dear, kind Aunt Tart permitted him to call "his study:" and a pretty little nook it was. I confess I should not think it the less interesting because in one corner "Dolly," a beautiful Isle-of-Sky terrier, was engaged in the maternal duty, and care-taking, necessary to the bringing up, and on, a litter of five puppies. There was the usual parade of books which are sure to be seen in the so-called "study" of a tyro—very *big*, and *wise*, and learned-looking in themselves, but reposing beneath an undisturbed quantity of dust. And there were books for memoranda and extracts, neither very full nor very neat; there were slippers, and an absolute dressing-gown, looking very manly and important against the wall, from which it was suspended: all things rather heaped up than displayed or arranged. The scholar's cap and robe which hung behind the door looked sadly freyed and ragged, while the cricket-bats, and foils, and fishing-rods were treated with much care and distinction. In this sanctum Edward pulled to pieces and put together his fishing-rods, his flies, and all the odds and ends that are never rightly comprehended by women; scraps, and sticks,

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and cords, that seem so important to a youth of twelve or thirteen, are frequently cast off with the old year as mere rubbish, while things neither more useful nor beautiful usurp their places.

We will leave Edward in the undisturbed enjoyment of his den, where he was cordially welcomed by the lady and her family, and return to the little circle in the pretty, comfortable country drawing-room, where the moon was playing at bo-peep through the green trellis, and where the largest and brightest of all Palmer's large and bright candle-lamps shed its subdued radiance to the farthest corner of the room. Aunt Tart was engaged in the mysteries of *crochet;* and while one sister was busied with the gathers of a baby's frock, which she had volunteered to make for a poor woman, the other was copying music—an occupation which all young ladies who desire to read music fluently should deem it a privilege to practise.

Cousin Jacob sat looking at the lamp, as if, like the moon, it contained mountains. There was that peculiar expression in his face which Aunt Tart so often observed, "As if," she said, "he was looking *into himself.*" When his face

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evinced so much anxiety, no one cared, or rather liked, to disturb him, but left him to himself. At times his lips would move without emitting any sound, at others you heard words that conveyed no meaning to the hearer. Occasionally the young girls glanced at the old man, who seemed quite unconscious of their presence, and yet they knew by experience that if they said or did anything he did not approve, his attention would neither slumber nor sleep. He would, as it were, pounce upon them at once, revived by the power of doing them service, though very often it was a service they could have dispensed with.

Every now and then the sisters glanced stealthily at him, and Miss Tart peeped *over* her spectacles, while a half-smile illumined her placid and yet anxious face. He rose, and paced up and down the room, but without seeming conscious of his restlessness; and then, when they expected he was *really* going to begin, when he laid his hand on the back of the chair he usually occupied, and cleared his voice by a deep and long-drawn "Hem—hem!" he made an abrupt movement, turning suddenly round, then walking out of the room.

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"There now, aunt," exclaimed the elder young lady, "we shall hear nothing of the Whisperer to-night: I must say that Cousin Jacob is very provoking."

"And perplexing," added the other; "and I must say I do not think we deserve such treatment!"

"Why?" inquired Aunt Tart.

"Because, dear aunt, we have been so very good, and done so much to please him."

"For *his* advantage, or *your* own?" inquired Aunt Tart as she took off her spectacles.

"Oh, I daresay it has been for *our* advantage, if you look at it steadily!" was the reply.

"I will tell you a little story," said Aunt Tart. "Once upon a time I took a great interest in a poor Irish family. I had never seen any people so miserable or so merry: the children nestled into their rags as if they were luxuries; and the mother shouldered a pair of twins in the folds of her blue cloak with as much tenderness and pride as if she had the certainty of housing them every night in a comfortable home. Her feet—and the feet of such of her progeny as could walk—were covered with blisters, and the two elder children were as

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ignorant as herself. This beggar-woman enlisted my sympathies by her good-humour and the generosity of her disposition. She had just asked me for charity, and I was about to give her a shilling, when a wretched old woman came up tremblingly, and told me she was starving. My first applicant, in a brogue I can give you no idea of, said—

'Why, thin, my lady, that's thrue; she is a great object intirely, and wants charity worse than myself; and that's bad enough!'

"I told her I had but a shilling, and that I was going to give it to her when the stranger came up.

'God bless you all the same!' said the first. '*Divide it with us!* and that's all and more than I expected.'

"This generosity, as you will believe, gave me great pleasure; and I took an interest in the poor woman's future welfare, and prevailed on the relative whose house was my home at the time to let her one of his pet cottages. I saw that the children were comfortably clad, and sent them to school. The woman, unfortunately, had acquired such a habit of begging, that she could not put it off when the necessity for it

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had ceased, and she was evermore tormenting me. At last I was obliged to refuse her something she wanted, or fancied she wanted, very much, and I could not help smiling, even while provoked, when she said—

'And is *that* the way you're going to treat me, my lady, after my braiking my heart to keep the place clane, and letting my children go to school, and wear shoes, *to plase your honour?*'"

"How horrid!" exclaimed one sister.

"How ungrateful!" said the other.

"I wonder *you* should think so," observed Aunt Tart.

"Oh why, dear aunt; surely everything you did was for her own good?"

"Exactly; and all Cousin — *dear* Cousin Jacob's teaching and preaching has been for *your* good; and all you have done 'to please him,' as you call it, for your own advantage. I think you are both of you worse than the poor Irish beggar-woman!"

"Oh, aunty, aunty!" said the sisters, "who would have suspected *you* of such a trick? If indeed Cousin Jacob had invented such a lesson-trap"——

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"I heard my name!" interrupted Cousin Jacob, opening the door. "I only went out to have a little private conversation with the Whisperer!"

The sisters looked significantly at each other; and one murmured, with a serious air, "Depend upon it, *it* is the man in the moon: he often goes out in the moonlight to have a chat with the man in the moon!"

"Now, touching this Whisperer," continued Cousin Jacob as he seated himself — "now, touching this Whisperer, I think I told you how he reproved me for apple-stealing, and the good he did me? That was in the days of my very young boyhood, when want of wisdom, and not appreciating his invaluable admonitions, brought me into many a scrape! After that memorable event, I think I improved; indeed I know I did, for he told me so; but I had so many faults to correct, that I could not expect to attain perfection, even in my own esteem, for a very long time. I once got into a serious difficulty: a boy for whom I had a sincere affection committed a great fault. I was the only one who knew he was the guilty boy. I shall never forget the long moonlight night—("Moonlight again!"

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thought Clementine)—when we sat together in my little room, which my kind parent desired I should have to myself, the tears flowing down his pale cheeks, and sobs convulsing his frame, while he intreated me not to tell. I abhorred a falsehood, and I also abhorred tale-bearing; and I would have taken the blame on myself, had it been possible to do so with any regard to truth. He was a feeble, delicate creature, weak in body and in mind, but like a woodbine, so yielding and affectionate, and so terribly afraid of 'the doctor,' our schoolmaster. Had it not been for the Whisperer, I should certainly have committed myself; promised to conceal—to equivocate—to suggest something else—to do one or other of the wrong, mean, cowardly things which are, in fact, untruths, because they are not truths. I can recall the suffering of that night even now, and hear the reproaches which he cast upon me, because I would not save him.

"At last an idea crept into my mind, and after consulting the Whisperer, and finding he did not disapprove, I resolved to act upon it. At daybreak I had left my little friend, who, ever since he came to the school, had been dependent upon

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me, in a state of the greatest agitation. I returned to him; his hands were cold and clammy, his eyes swollen, his head throbbing; he was almost suffocated with emotion—regret for what he had done, mingled with terror at the anticipated punishment. Poor little fellow!

'I know you are right, Jacob,' he said—'I know you are quite right; but I would rather not see you again!'

"I told him he need not fear; that a way had suggested itself to my mind to save him, and I would do it. He so firmly relied on me, that in five minutes he was in bed and asleep: but when getting-up time came, the tutor reported that the child was in a high fever.

"The doctor entered the school-room with a thunder-storm on his brow. I saw what was coming. He ordered the boys to be called together: all were present except the guilty one; his illness was duly reported. Questions were put after the usual fashion; and when I was inquired of, I declared myself not guilty: then I was asked, like the others, if I knew who was; I said yes! A murmur ran round the room, and the doctor looked still more terrible. I was told to name the culprit: I refused; I did it

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respectfully, but firmly. I would not tell; I said I would die first; and as a proof of it, was ready to bear any punishment that would have fallen—that I did not deny ought to fall —upon the boy who had done the wrong. I was a little fellow then—young ladies, you look as if you did not think me a big one now—but I was *very little* then, and I saw my schoolmates peering over each other to look at me. The doctor thundered 'I'll not believe it; he is himself the culprit;' but half a score of voices called out, 'No, sir—no, sir; please, sir, he was out on leave when it occurred.' It is very wrong of people to doubt the steadiness and truth of others, only because they have not seen them proved. The doctor doubted me, and put me to the severest test—I was flogged. Still I said, 'I do know, but I will not tell; I will bear the punishment.' The doctor was kind and well-meaning, but he was in a passion, and moreover he could not know my motive. I was helped out of the school-room nearly fainting; but I had saved from punishment a weak, gentle, affectionate child, whose parents were in a distant country. I had done this without telling or inferring an untruth: and I heard

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the head usher say to the doctor, as I passed, 'I know Jacob well; believe me, it is not obstinacy, but honour!'"

"It was well done, Cousin Jacob," said Aunt Tart, peeping over her spectacles, which she always did whenever she wanted to see distinctly—"it was well done; and the boy for whom you suffered, how grateful he must have been!"

"He *would* have been, indeed, I think, if he had ever known it; but, poor little fellow, his nervous system had received so severe a shock, that he died within a week, and in my arms!"

"Did you tell then?" inquired Clementine.

"Oh no! the honour of a dead friend is even more sacred than the honour of a living one. Besides, they might have been making a fuss about it; and I did not want my sacrifice to receive the reward of praise. The Whisperer said that all secrets should be buried in the grave, and that the tomb should be as a seal unto my lips. The approbation of the Whisperer was always difficult to win, and there is nothing so exhilarating as the con-

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sciousness of having done a generous action. I *knew* I had it, because the Whisperer told me so!

"I have dwelt longer than I need upon this little incident, because I became at that time much attached to the Whisperer, and yielded so implicitly to his advice, that the remainder of my boyhood passed in a way quite extraordinary. I became a pattern boy. I was looked up to, trusted, and respected by all. The Whisperer and myself used to have the greatest possible enjoyment in each other. We knelt together at morning and evening prayer; and the last thing at night, the first thing in the morning, there was my untiring friend. His voice too—his voice, which at first, ay, and sometimes afterwards, growled harshly in my ears—at that time was perfect music—a low, soft murmur. He was with me everywhere, and I was never more happy than in his society.

"Time passed on. I became a man, at least in my own estimation; and I am sorry to say that sometimes I neglected the admonitions of my long-tried and best friend."

Aunt Tart said, "How did he bear it—patiently?"

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"*Not* at all!" was the reply. "Could a real, true friend, as the Whisperer ever was to me, bear to see the creature loved, and warned, and cared for, going wrong, and yet bear it what is called *patiently*? Could *I* see my friend Clementine there, and her sister, going wrong, and not tell them of it? I am sure they know I could do no such thing. Even before I loved them as I do now, they know that I put on a large pair of magnifying spectacles, made on purpose, that I might see every fault, big and little, and somehow or other rout them out, send them flying—packing—what you will, so I only compelled them to vanish. Talk of love being blind," continued the little old gentleman: "I'll never believe it! It was an invention of heathendom to make him a little, fat, rosy half-baby, with a bow and arrow, and sometimes a handkerchief over his eyes. Stuff! rubbish! Much more like the truth to have made him an Argus—I suppose you know what *that* is?—a creature all over eyes, and with a long beak: the eyes to see faults, the long beak to pick them out. No friend like Argus! all eyes to see your faults, and a fine long beak to pick them out. *That's* it," he con-

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tinued, glancing from one to the other: "a fine long, strong, sharp beak to pick them *all* out!"

"Gobble them up, and be done with them!" interrupted Clementine laughing.

"Cle—men—tine!" said Aunt Tart in a slow, reproachful tone—"Cle—men—ti—ne! how can you"——

"No, no—good girl!" said Cousin Jacob. "The sentiment ought to be expressed in a more feminine and graceful manner, I grant you; but it is a praiseworthy opinion. A fault is a fault: the longer it is let alone, the longer grow the roots—the deeper hold it gets on the character and habits. The first pang at parting is the most severe, and then comes the triumph. I have conquered, not others—that is comparatively easy—but myself. Ah, nothing like an Argus! all eyes, and a sharp beak! Such a one the Whisperer was to me. I became sadly troublesome—I had grown conceited. I muttered against him, and talked of chains and trammels, and getting rid of his perpetual fault-finding. I insulted him—he did not mind that: I accused him of falsehood—he laughed at me bitterly, because he suggested I knew that I was telling

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a story of myself to myself when I said so. I insisted that he was not fit to accompany me into the giddy society I frequented: he thought so too, and yet he would come, if not *with* me, *after* me—now at my elbow, then at my heels, like a faithful dog. Sometimes my actions gave him great pleasure. I remember how pleased he was with my conduct to the farmer from whom you have heard so much; and yet, if I gave a large subscription to a public charity, instead of receiving from him a smile of approbation, he would meet me with a frown, and tell me to 'look to my motives.' If I beat my dog in a temper, he would smite me gently: if I forgot a promise, he was quite unmerciful: if I forgot a friend"——

"You never did *that*, Cousin Jacob, in all your life-long!" interrupted Aunt Tart.

"No, not forget, but neglect one."

"I doubt that too," said the kind lady; "but go on."

"In fact I am almost ashamed to say it in the present company, but for a time we led a very cat-and-dog life. I wonder he did not get weary of me, and give me up as incorrigible. Any other friend would; but he was never absent—

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never weary. He never slumbered, but watched my words, analysed my motives, tried my thoughts.

"Again, after a time, when a thirst for gain drove me over the wide ocean to a distant land —when travelling, now accomplished in days, took weeks and months—the Whisperer told me—(I heard his voice clearly amid the roll of the wild waters, and louder in its silence than the thunder)—that if I sowed the wind, I should reap the whirlwind; and that unless I 'kept innocency, and took heed to the thing that was right,' I should have no 'peace at the last.'

"My best friend understood all languages, though he spoke only one to me; and what you may consider very wonderful, he never uttered a word of my thoughts to any human being but myself! Though he used to annoy me so continually, I could get no sound repose without his approbation: he has kept me night after night wide awake, staring into the darkness, when I would have given the world to sleep; but instead of poppies, he has often and often strewed my pillow with thorns—and very sharp ones.

"But there came a time to me of great sick-

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ness. I had been most prosperous; and the voices of flatterers sounded so sweetly in my ears, agreeing as they did with all my fancies, and praising my follies, as if they had been perfections, that I listened less than ever to my true friend, though I must confess he succeeded in making me most uncomfortable by his reproaches; but this great trial of sickness came, and I was left alone with him! Ah, Miss Clementine, *that* was worse than anything you ever endured from double lessons, steel-stays, back-board, stocks, or the reproof of a fiddle-stick from the most impatient of French dancing-masters.

"I wonder how I can laugh at what I endured then; but it did me good. I did my best ever after to keep at peace with the Whisperer; but it is no easy matter—no easy matter! Hard to keep at peace with him, and no peace unless you do."

The young ladies had grown very restless; and Aunt Tart, whose self-satisfied "Ah—ah!" "Yes," "I daresay," showed that she had read, or fancied she had read, the riddle—would have disturbed any one less earnest than Cousin Jacob.

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"But who is he? Where is he?" inquired the sisters. "Let us *see* him!"

"Impossible!" said Cousin Jacob.

"Let us *hear* him then."

"You do often—often. Every one has a WHISPERER of his own: some more particular, more powerful than others; but we all—and we ought reverently to bless God for it—we all have our WHISPERER—*here!*" said the old man, laying his hand upon his bosom—"HERE! showing us right from wrong, allowing us no peace in evil courses"——

"Oh my!" exclaimed one.

"Oh dear!" said the other.

"Well, there is something here that, if I spend *all* my money on a new bonnet, *whispers* of the poor young girl at Greyhill Cottage, who is of gentle breeding, and yet has no shoes."

"And Clementine, shall you ever forget that night you know when we never slept, and how glad we were in the morning to do—— Ah, *you* know!"

"Very luminous doubtless," muttered Cousin Jacob.

"*Whisperer!* how dull not to have made

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it out at once!" said Clementine, her eyes brightening while she spoke. "Cat-and-dog life! Well, that is so *true* when one gets into a little scrape—how that *something* inside does worry!"

"You should have said something, Cousin Jacob," suggested Aunt Tart, "about *its* making one blush very much if one does anything not right, or says anything not true!"

"I had not half done," was the cousin's reply, "when you found me out."

"I suppose you have all found it out by *this* time?" said Edward, advancing with an air which said, "I knew it long ago!"

"Ah, the WHISPERER has given you many hard thumps, Master Ned! No wonder you should recognise him more quickly than the young ladies, who do not so frequently provoke him."

"Perhaps so, Cousin Jacob," replied Edward; "and if I have provoked my CONSCIENCE, you have taught me how it may be conciliated."

"I hope," said the old gentleman, "that you will all learn to appreciate the value of the *still small voice* which warns you against evil—that never slumbers nor sleeps, but is implanted

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within each bosom as a protection against *yourself* even more than against others. If you listen to the counsels of the WHISPERER, you will have lived to the glory of God, the good of your fellow-creatures, and secured—by deserving—your own SELF-RESPECT!"

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L'Envoy.

Firfield, Addlestone, April 1850.

My Dear Young Friends,

I hope this little volume will find its way into many a cheerful nursery and more thoughtful study, and be so fortunate as to awaken those who have hitherto neglected the Whisperer, to hear the

"Still small voice,"

which is at once the voice of a reproving and a protecting angel. Many of you rush into mischief without the least intention of harming any one or anything, and your young lives pass in various troubles, which but anticipate the tempests of after years. Such natures are im-

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petuous and impatient of control; their feet are swift, their hands prone to destruction, their tongues so rapidly and carelessly employed, that their WHISPERER is seldom permitted to finish his quiet sentence of warning or reproof; he has not been able to tell them distinctly what is sure to follow their having their own way, until it is too late for aught—but *repentance;* and happily it is never too late for that. But believe the WHISPERER when he tells you there is only one sort of repentance of any value: the "very sorry" is not worth a straw!—the great round tears are merely so much salt water, unless the resolution to "turn over a new leaf" be persevered in. Nothing delights your friend the WHISPERER so much as firmness and perseverance in a good cause, in a right resolve: if you observed minutely, you might feel how he palpitates with joy when you keep a good resolution, or pause in the midst of a temptation, to inquire of him what is best to be done.

How often, when your cheek has been heated, and your reason obscured by passion, have you neglected the counsels which only intreated you to "have patience," "to take time," to "consider," and then regretted in the inmost recesses

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of your throbbing heart that "you had not patience," "did not take time," did not "consider!" But you, dear children of one great family, are all differently constituted; reflect upon this for a few minutes, and you will see how true it is.

You, Henry, rush into a mighty passion at once; for a time you stifle your WHISPERER; you are enraged with him because he pricks you so severely. You think to send him off in a whirlwind; you shout, you halloo, you swagger in your pea-jacket, and toss your cap on your head with an air of defiance. Now you know, Henry, all this will not do; you are feverish and discontented after one of these outbreaks; your father's anger is stern and determined; your mother's tearful eyes are as full of tenderness as of reproof; your brothers and sisters get out of your way; the dog whom you would caress remembers your last kick, and crouches with a leer and a growl under the great hall table. As the fever of bad temper abates, you would rather not be looked at; it is ten to one if you do not creep up the backstairs to bed. "Where," you say, "was the use of asking papa's pardon? He would not

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give it:" and as to mamma, why, she did kiss your brow in the hall, and pressed her hand on your head, and said, "God forgive you, my poor child, you are carving out a world of misery for yourself!" Even after *that*, you repeat a prayer coldly, and get to bed quickly. Ah, ah, young gentleman, the WHISPERER has you now! Ay, bury your head in your pillow, he is knocking at your ear; toss as much as you please, his spell is on you: he recapitulates not only whatever you said or did, but puts in quite a different light all that was said and done to you; he tells you that it is absurd to conceal, under the name of "excitement," what is positive and decided violence of temper. He shows you your impiety, your ingratitude to your parents, your injustice to your family, your foolishness in all things. He tells you that all the noble qualities in the world are comparatively useless unless harmonised by good temper. You tell him you are soon out of your ill-humour, and he reminds you how quickly you are in it again. You sleep, or imagine you sleep —he is with you in your dreams; he shows you, in a vision perhaps, what will be the end if you do not steadily resolve, when you find the fit

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coming on, to make no sign, and speak no word; he tells you how surely you will triumph if you combat faithfully and humbly, not trusting in your own strength, but praying for that which cometh from above.

You, Master Charles, are altogether different. Your WHISPERER has no occasion to tell you to "pause" and "consider:" you are slow and solemn; and so well does he know this, that he is perpetually reproaching you for your "dream-ways," and showing you that unless you enter on the march of life with a determination to press forward in every good cause you undertake, you will never be either great or good; and if you are neither, you will be like the unwise man who hid his talent under a bushel. Your WHISPERER tells you that you are too self-satisfied; and because your brother is too quick, you pride yourself on the infirmity of being too slow!—as if it were necessary to have a fault. Your monitor whispers faithfully, "Press forward — press forward!" Listen, and attend while it is yet morning.

Lucy, you are neither as violent as Harry nor as slow as Charles, and yet your WHISPERER enjoys no sinecure. You are wilful, prone to

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show what you consider wit, but which, in fact, is only pertness; you are also untidy and thriftless. Your WHISPERER can never calculate upon a moment when his advice is not necessary. you would resist these constant admonitions; but remember, if he worries you, you worry him. Your promises of amendment are frequent, but not persevered in. Sometimes he has to remind you of the needless trouble you give to all around you, of the fatigue you occasion your maid, and the additional anxiety you inflict on your governess; and yet your WHISPERER has at times good cause for satisfaction. You are an affectionate little girl, despite your thriftlessness; and you would be greatly beloved if you would heed the WHISPERER when he tells *you*, as well as Henry, to "keep silence if you desire to keep friends." I must say, on the questions of thrift, and neatness, and wit, you bear reproof well; but you do not like to be considered wilful, and dispute the fact sturdily, even during your secret conferences with the WHISPERER when he sits down upon your pillow, while the clear moonlight and the winking stars illumine the drowsy or the dreamy world.

You three all differ from each other, and yet

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Jane differs from you all. She is called cold and proud: and yet when any she loves are ill, Jane is with them night and day. She leaves her books, her painting, her self-imposed lessons, everything, to minister to their wants and wishes; but when they are well, she is silent and reserved, and then they say she has no sympathy! She is like that nightly flower which you, Lucy, admire so much, which gives forth all its perfume in the night, and closes its treasures against the mirth of sunshine. Her WHISPERER could tell you how satisfied he is with Jane. He could tell you how, years ago, Jane *conquered herself*, and how, beneath that frigid manner, which is certainly a fault, her young pure heart is beating warmly. She was once almost as stormy as Henry, but she listened to the WHISPERER, who talked a great deal to her when she was ill—some thought ill unto death—and the silence and loneliness of that bitter sickness was rendered a blessing to her and to others, as sickness often is; but it required so much exertion to keep herself in order, that the cold, severe manner became natural to her. The WHISPERER now often tells her of it; but for

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all *you* may think, that WHISPERER knows that Jane is *not proud*—not proud of her learning, for she knows enough to know that she knows very little—not proud of the silk attire which the large, fair worm of China spun; nor of the pearls which the oyster grew; nor of the fine linen which was once the waving flax of the cultured field; nor of her lofty beauty, which she knows must be bowed unto the grave before her bright and really humble spirit can ascend into heaven. Jane is an honour, a comfort, a blessing to all who know her; and she so often consults the WHISPERER, that I have no doubt her coldness of manner will soon pass away.

That little boy Edmund has as severe contentions with the WHISPERER as any little fellow I know. Poor Edmund! he is both generous and greedy; but *so* greedy: so fond of toffy, and all manner of unwholesome, disagreeable things! It is really astonishing how little he has to do with the doctors at present, though, if he continue his system, there is no doubt of his being a very sickly man. He is only nine, and yet he has a heavy, inactive look, particularly if he has been into town, with a fresh supply of grandmamma's money in those

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soiled trouser pockets. "I am going," he says, "to give half those plums to my tiny Cousin Julia; and I shall give her also five sugar almonds, and a good piece of toffy; and if I give her half this orange, I am sure she will give me half of that fine large brown Russetin apple. I—I would give her some hard bake, and pink and yellow stick; but I don't think she cares for them. I will give her three—no, two good pieces of this piece of plum-cake." And as he paused, the WHISPERER said softly, "Make haste, and do it then: delay is dangerous." Upon which Edmund looked proud, and said "Psha!" and then he undid the little parcels, and ate freely until he thought it best to pause, and put a few—not the *half* certainly —of the plums into his left-hand pocket. "Poor little Julia!" suggested the WHISPERER. "She was so kind to you when you ate the whipt cream so greedily, and greased your waistcoat. She got all the stains out." "That is true," answered Edmund; "and I would put this plum back, only I have bitten the end off." "That is the last of the sugared almonds," said his monitor; "and unless you put it away, that will go after Julia's other four." "They were

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not Julia's," he said: "they were mine." "A promise is a debt," murmured the WHISPERER. Edmund held the almond between his finger and thumb, smelt it, touched it, just, very tenderly, with the tip of his tongue. *That* was the finale! Scrunch—scrunch—it was gone!

"Oh, Edmund, for shame!"

He divided the orange honestly—but when he finished his half, he was tempted to taste the other—if it had been a little sour even—but it was so sweet! "It would be shabby," he said, "to offer Julia half an orange!" and that quickly disappeared. "I am really ashamed of you," said the WHISPERER in a contemptuous tone; "and you will surely be ill," he added in a sorrowful one. "Oh fie! a great boy of nine and three-quarters make himself sick by eating." The WHISPERER was right; and while he was very sorry, I confess I was very glad, for I thought a good earnest fit of sickness a just punishment for such shameful greediness.

There are few families without either a Henry, a Charles, a Lucy, or an Edmund; but there are *none* without WHISPERERS. The young baby, before it can walk or talk, knows when it has done wrong; and children should help each

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other—they should not provoke the passionate one to passion, or offend the "sulky" one; they should strengthen each other in good resolutions; and, above all, they should exercise patience and loving-kindness towards each other.

When I was a little girl, my dear good mother placed a card above my pillow, and on it was written—"Remember what you have done between sunrise and sunset."

This often caused me tears, for my WHISPERER was often displeased with me; but I tried to listen patiently, and to compare DEEDS and MOTIVES; and often when I had been elated with the praise I received for a good or generous action, the WHISPERER was so kind as to show me that the only actions acceptable in the sight of God are those that spring from pure motives. We must love goodness, because it comes from God; not because we are praised for being good! And I would intreat you all, when you have finished the history (which indeed *I* have not finished; for I have not yet told you how greatly those three children improved, and what valuable, good people they are now; and how Miss Tart, when congratulated upon her "cleverness" in bringing them up so well, declares it

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was all Cousin Jacob's excellent management): when you have, I say, finished this little volume, just pause and think what you have "said and done between sunrise and sunset," and inquire of the WHISPERER if he thinks you have done well and wisely. No examination is of the same advantage as *self-examination*. Only try it! It is well to find ourselves out, instead of being troubled to find out others. Cultivate all noble and unselfish impulses; and while you "fear not to tell the truth," be modest as ingenuous in your demeanour. The WHISPERER is always with you—I want you to remember that; and if this little volume helps you to do so, it will not have been written in vain.

THE END.

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